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Stories of occupation and resistance . . . p.10

Temper, temper . . .p. 13

63rd year of publication

Alternative speech from the Throne

Kathy Vandergrift – CPJ co-chair (and not yet Governor General!)

The Governor General's Throne (on the left), with the Speaker's Chair in front.

"The holiday season allowed all Canadians and our Government to reflect more deeply on the challenges we face as a nation and how we can best act together to meet them.

"We have learned that our well-being is linked to others, so we need to work together. We have learned that putting our faith in the marketplace alone will not solve our needs. We have learned that a few profiting at the expense of others does not produce sustainable wealth. We have learned that governing is not a game for scoring points. Responsible government is essential for a healthy marketplace, a productive society, and for Canada's future.

"The agenda for this 41st Session will use the gifts of every parliamentarian to ensure that by the end of this recession, Canada becomes a stronger nation, a more equitable society, and a better steward of our natural and human resources.

Social and economic reforms for the common good

"An economic stimulus package will be introduced in tomorrow's budget, a response to this current crisis. We will give priority to investing in necessary physical and social infrastructure as a means of creating more jobs. The following measures will help build a just economy:

• Broadening the economic advisory group beyond business leaders to include workers, community leaders, social service providers, and spiritual advisors, recognizing that everyone has something valuable to contribute.

• Adopting a poverty reduction strategy will be a top priority during this Parliament, to ensure that the most vulnerable do not bear the burden of economic adjustment. Measures to reduce the wealth gap and assist the vulnerable will include reforming Employment Insurance, improving the child benefit system and affordable housing, as well as doubling the Working Income Tax Benefit.

• Implementing a social infrastructure investment program to improve community services, using a civic partnership model. This will deliver a high level of short-term economic benefits and build long-term resilience at the community level.

Political reform

"The events of last year have shown that systemic democratic reforms are clearly needed, even if it means eventually opening constitutional discussions.

"Renewing Canadian citizenship as an active covenant between all peoples who make up this great country will build unity across provincial borders and cultural and religious boundaries. We will:

• Replace the proposed Charter of Open Federalism with a Charter of Citizenship Rights and Responsibilities, recognizing that all Canadians have important rights and responsibilities.

• Commit Parliament to developing a Canadian model of proportional representation, after consultation with citizens across the country, developing a proposal for consideration as part of the next federal election.

• Convene all-party discussions on procedural change in the House of Commons, with a full public report in six months, to help restore the confidence of Canadians in their parliament.

"Putting our faith in the marketplace alone will not solve our needs."

Global peace with justice

"The high cost and low return of war, in financial and human terms, cannot be sustained. Resolving conflicts and strengthening international institutions that contribute to international co-operation and peaceful conflict resolution will be the top foreign policy objective in 2009, starting with sustained support for community-based peace initiatives in Afghanistan and active regional diplomacy to support sustainable peace. Our Government will:

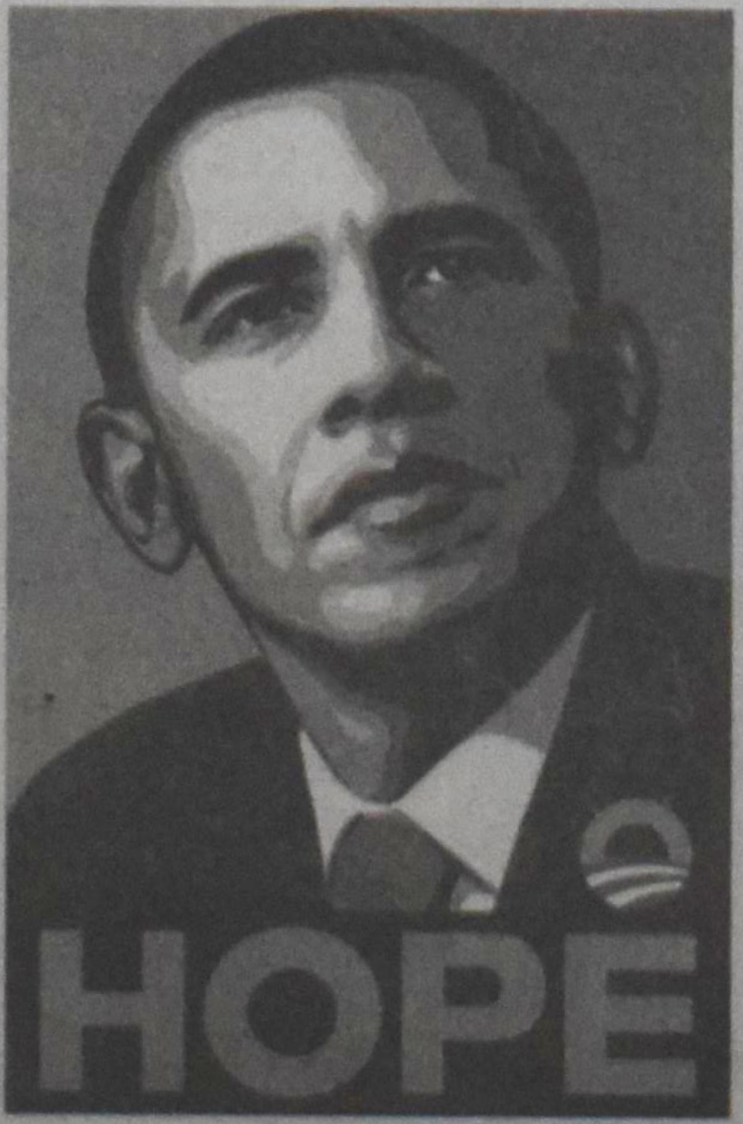
See **Alternative speech** *...cont. on p. 2*

Good morning America, it's Obama's "New Dawn"

Brendan Kooy

On January 20, 2009, a new era of American politics began. Barack Obama was sworn in as the 44th President of the United States in front of millions of adoring citizens and well-wishers, beginning what promises to be nothing short of a historic term in office.

Americans had spoken *en masse* throughout the last several years, declaring disgust with the politics of fear and bumbling that had grown to characterize the years of the Bush administration. Approval ratings hit all-time lows; the economy was in shambles; and death tolls continued to mount in misunderstood foreign conflicts. While Bush, in his final days, did restore America's memory of what his administration *had* done in the past eight years – prevent further attacks on US soil after 9/11, launch a war on terror that has reaped significant results, and proclaim a doctrine of freedom across the country – America was ready for a change.



This poster typifies how many Americans view Obama.

"Faith did not merely flank the Obama platform; it was foundational to it."

Barack Obama ushered in that change in a powerful and significant manner on the 20th. Gracefully thanking Bush for his time

See **Obama's New Dawn** *...cont. on p. 2*

Obama's New Dawn...continued from page 1

and accomplishments in office, and committing to building on the significant progress made in the war on terror, Obama clearly set out a new path for America.

While presidential inaugurations have always been a matter of great pomp and circumstance, this particular day stands out as one of the most heralded in recent memory. To be sure, Americans look back on presidents such as Lincoln, Roosevelt and Kennedy and mark their tremendous legacies. But to saddle Obama with such great expectation and hype – a pre-legacy, if you will – is something never seen before.

Capitol building, site of the inauguration.

In his address, the new President was quick to dismiss himself as any sort of mystical godsend. In the tough times his nation faces today, Obama remarked that it is not by the strength of those in oval office that America survives; instead, it is by the strength of its people.

Hard as it must be for one with his popularity and immense public trust, Obama has respectably refused to give in to playing the role of conquering hero and saviour. He has not fallen into the trap of empty rhetoric, choosing instead to orate about the high road of honesty and responsibility.

Obama's inaugural address was wrought with the aged virtues of peace, dignity, responsibility and hard work. He sought to win over Republicans and Democrats alike; Christians, Muslims and non-believers; Americans of all different races and backgrounds.

Perhaps the most striking characteristic of Obama's words on the 20th was the prevalence of religious conviction. From the controversial selection of evangelical pastor Rick Warren to give the inaugural prayer to the several Scriptural references in his own speech, Obama demonstrated the application of his personal faith to be neither manipulative nor situational. Faith obviously did not merely flank the Obama platform; it was foundational to it.

It became apparent during his first day in office that Obama is forming a presidential persona different than what Americans have ever seen before. While he embodies so many of his predecessors – the convictions of Lincoln, the charisma of JFK, and the decisiveness of Reagan – the new president seems to be able to harness the eclectic reality of America today like none other.

While Obama is still in the honeymoon stage of his presidency, his first day and week were impressive. As he acknowledged, there are significant challenges to face, and America will not overcome them on his strength alone.

Years from now, Obama's time in office will be looked back on and judged. The criteria will not be his own accolades or accomplishments; it will be his ability to inspire and ignite the creativity and confidence of the nation in the coming years.

So far, the new president is off to a good start.

Barack Obama re-takes the presidential oath of office the next morning.

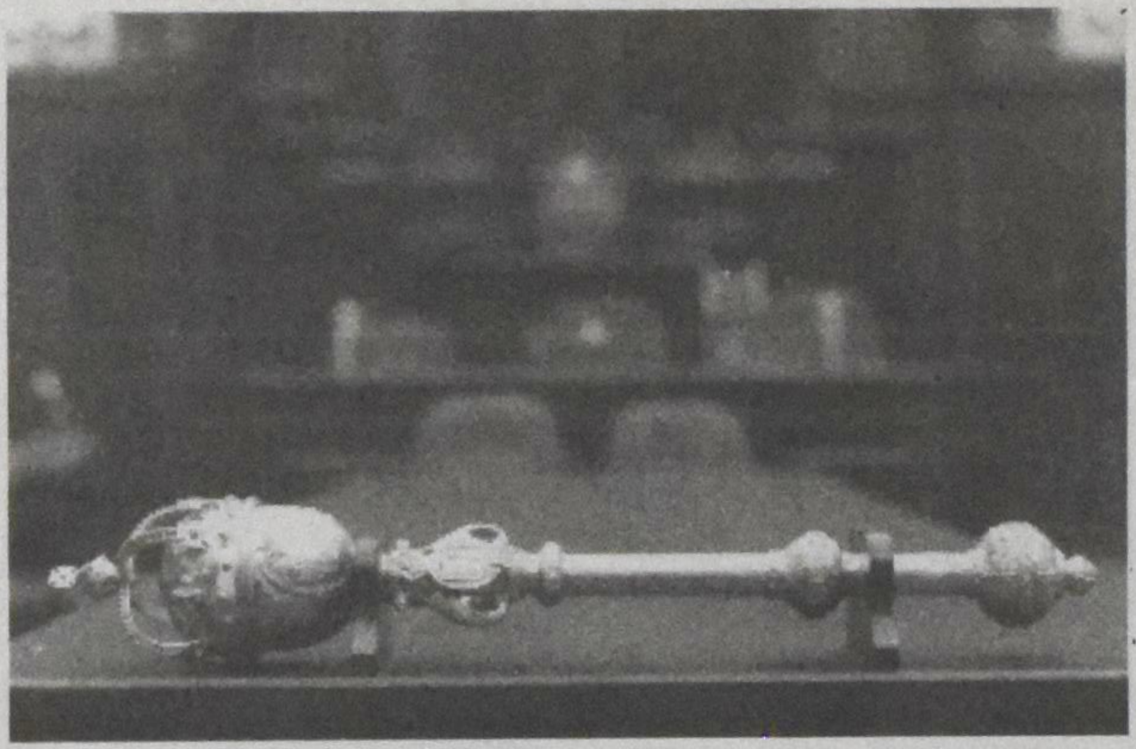
Brendan Kooy is the Ontario representative for the Christian Labour Association of Canada (CLAC). He currently resides in Chatham, Ontario.

Alternative speech . . . continued from p. 1

Stewardship of the environment

"Greening Canada's economy is essential to integrating environmental protection with economic development. We will:

- Act on previous parliamentary decisions on global warming and environmental protection, approved through all-party review processes, by tabling implementation strategies.
- Promote "greener" solutions in transportation, manufacturing and home building through all physical infrastructure spending.
- End federal subsidies to the fossil fuel industry, diverting this money to support green energy initiatives.
- All Canadian extractive-sector companies operating abroad will comply with the consensus recommendations of business, government and civil society groups, expressed in the 2007 Final Report of the Advisory Group to the Corporate Social Responsibility Roundtables. In particular, we will establish an Ombudsman to monitor and report on social and environmental practices overseas.


The mace, signifying that the House of Commons is now in session.

- Establish a Department of Peace, with a senior Minister, to engage in international diplomacy, work with existing officials in the Department of Foreign Affairs and with Canadian civil society organizations dedicated to international development and peace-building.
- Recognize that international development assistance levels, as a percentage of GDP, have fallen to less than half of what Canada promised. Budget 2009 will establish a timetable of iron-clad increases to raise aid to 0.7 per cent of GDP by 2018.
- Repatriate Canadian Omar Khadr in keeping with the recommendation of the House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee and President Obama's closure of Guantanamo Bay.

Conclusion

"While challenges may abound, together we can work towards making government a place of public justice for all."

Kathy Vandergrift is the policy expert and co-chair of Citizens for Public Justice, and a Master's Degree candidate in Public Ethics at St. Paul University. She lives in Ottawa.

Federal budget a lost opportunity, says CPJ

Ottawa, ON: While applauding the government's serious approach to the economic crisis, Citizens for Public Justice (CPJ) is disappointed that the federal budget did not contain a poverty reduction strategy or any significant measures to help the most vulnerable in Canada.

"We welcome the government's intention to run a short-term deficit, but, among other things, the budget missed out on two important fronts – helping the most vulnerable and moving towards a green economy," said Joe Gunn, executive director.

While Budget 2009 included changes to employment insurance and social housing funding, Gunn was clear these initiatives are not enough.

"The most vulnerable Canadians, those so poor they aren't paying taxes, don't benefit from this budget. There is a clear absence of any poverty reduction measures," he stated.

CPJ also called for increased green infrastructure spending beyond the home renovation tax credits the budget offered. Gunn continued, "This was also the ideal time to lay out a different, bigger vision of a more modern, green economy. But this moment has been lost. While infrastructure spending is beneficial, there was no move towards real alternative energy projects. CPJ is disappointed with the government's failure to make any strong commitments to the environment."

Citizens for Public Justice (CPJ) is a national organization that promotes public justice in Canada by shaping key policy debates through research and analysis, publishing and public dialogue. www.cpj.ca

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Principalities & Powers
David T. Koyzis

Great expectations and the US presidency

Last month Barack Obama was sworn in as forty-fourth President of the United States amid general rejoicing around the world. Huge crowds filled the national mall for the event, and people from Bogota to Bangkok, from Nanaimo to Nairobi, turned on their television sets so they too could be part of this historic event. Why so much fuss over one man taking office?

First, there is a widespread judgement that the Bush presidency was a failure. After 9/11 Bush pursued a war on terror whose goals were nebulous at best and showed little recognition of the limits of power, especially military power. In the face of almost universal disapproval, including that of the Vatican, the administration attacked Iraq, removing a hated tyrant, but lacking a clear vision of what to pursue by way of an alternative. Worse perhaps, in attempting to thwart its enemies, it unwisely alienated its allies, and, by detaining suspected terrorists without trial at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, it appeared to thumb its nose at America's own founding principles, especially the rule of law.

Two roles

Second, Obama himself, like his predecessor John F. Kennedy, has something of the aura of royalty about him. In a constitutional monarchy, like Canada and the United Kingdom, the queen is above partisan politics and symbolizes the unity of the nation. She is a focus of loyalty among her subjects and undertakes, through her speeches and other activities, to bring out the best in her people.

An American president must, of course, function as both king and prime minister, and it is the rare president who can successfully fulfil both roles well. Kennedy was an effective king, but a less effective prime minister. By contrast, his successor Lyndon Johnson was a crude man with great arm-twisting skills, enabling him finally to secure long denied civil rights for black Americans. Although Johnson was eventually done in by his failed wars in Vietnam and on poverty, during his first years in office he was an effective president, achieving more than Kennedy had.

Like Kennedy, Obama is an inspiring speaker, with a genuine gift for instilling confidence in huge numbers of people at home and abroad. If his political agenda remains somewhat vague, he nevertheless knows, unlike his recent predecessors, how to invoke and articulate American ideals in a way that makes them appealing even to the otherwise unpersuaded.

Elevated start

On the other hand, Obama has few accomplishments of his own other than running the con-summate political campaign. This itself could work against him over the long term. Obama has raised near messianic expectations for his performance in office. At the very beginning of his term, he is hugely popular, which suggests he may have peaked far too early. From here there seems nowhere to go but down. If his performance fails to live up to these expectations, which is very likely, he risks disappointing hundreds of millions, if not billions, of people.

Though I myself have been one of the sceptics and am put off by "Obama-mania," I do wish him well and, for what it's worth, offer him the assurance of my prayers as he undertakes to live up to the great expectations that he himself has played no small part in encouraging. May God grant him the grace and strength less to work wonders than to do justice in the ordinary day-to-day tasks of governance.

David T. Koyzis teaches political science at Redeemer University College, Ancaster, Ontario, and is the author of the award-winning Political Visions and Illusions *(InterVarsity Press). His blog can be found at:* <http://byzantinecalvinist.blogspot.com/

Disability Organizations in Canada and USA begin joint ministry

Grand Rapids, MI – Friendship Groups Canada and Friendship Ministries USA are joining hands across the border to enable people with cognitive impairments to become more engaged in the life of local church communities.

Formed in 1982, Friendship Ministries USA promotes a ministry model that emphasizes spiritual nurture in the context of mentoring relationships; it also provides Bible study materials. Since its formation in 1984, Friendship Groups Canada has promoted the same ministry model and study materials. For the past quarter-century, the two organizations have maintained separate staffs, consulting services, and promotional efforts.

"This is a wonderful opportunity for the approximately 155 Friendship programs in Canada and 800 in the United States to benefit from more coordinated efforts," said Judith VanderWilt, President of the Board of Friendship Ministries USA.

Added Bernie de Jonge, who heads the Friendship Groups Canada Board, "Not only does joint ministry make sense from the perspective of stewardship of donations, but also because we can enrich each other's ministry by sharing our experiences and ideas."

Friendship Groups Canada will now be known as "Friendship Ministries Canada" and will be governed by a board. Friendship Ministries USA will continue to be governed by its own board. The joint ministry, including representation from both boards, will operate under the name "Friendship Ministries."

Since its founding in the 1980s, Friendship Ministries has been helping people with cognitive impairments become active members of their congregations. Friendship Ministries provides a model for ministry, consulting to begin and maintain Friendship programs, and interdenominational study materials. Friendship Ministries has served more than 1,100 Friendship programs in more than 50 denominations in countries around the world.

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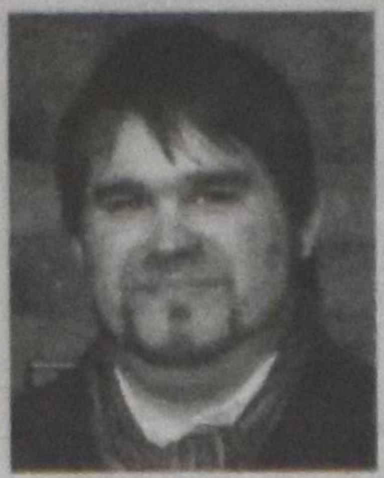
Editorials

A Weak Week?



Brett Alan Dewing

As I write this, President Barack Obama is marking exactly one week in the highest profile office in the world. Already, Christian media outlets have cried attack, Democrats have been divided on the ecology, and every talking head on the planet is dissecting what some saw as a thoroughly disastrous inauguration ceremony.

Republican commentator Michael Novak of the *National Review* has heralded Obama's first executive orders as a return to paganism and representative of an administration that seeks good headlines first, practical thinking later. *The American Thinker* has criticised the president's informal and dismissive handling of the press, and *The New York Times* posted a video of Press Secretary Robert Gibbs awkwardly making chitchat with reporters while accidentally revealing the identity of an anonymous source three times in one speech. Obama has been taken to task for trying overly hard to please everyone and reward political donors too quickly. He has been chastised for hobnobbing with celebrities on his inauguration day while skipping the Salute to Heroes Ball honouring military heroes (the first time in 56 years that the president has been a no-show). *The Economist* accuses Obama of running on a platform of having cake and eating it. His economic stimulus plan has been re-dubbed The Generational Theft Act by conservative columnist Michelle Malkin.

You get the idea. The man has been scrutinized. His first efforts at his signature change" have been torn apart. If any of us were subjected to such a critical eye during our first week of work, we wouldn't make it to a second.

But is this always the case with a new president? Yes, anyone holding such a spotlight position in the world's eye is going to be taken to task. He didn't make things any easier, however, by running a campaign based upon reactionary (and vague) change. During the elections, people were expecting the earth to move. Ralliers inter-viewed about their allegiance to Obama cited such specific expectations that no man could fill them without dedicating a month to each household in America. This is the way of campaigning, but now Obama positivism is starting to bite back with an unavoidable Obama letdown backlash.

A Saviour on Capitol Hill

It's a safe bet that when you see my name in this space, some sort of song lyric isn't far behind. In this case, I cannot help but be reminded of Derek Webb's A Savior on Capitol Hill. Webb starts by admitting that we all yearn for a president who will lead us with perfect vision and an unfailing hand. We all in some way expect a saviour when we vote for a president.

And yet, Capitol Hill runs on capital after all. Webb cautions us that as long as the lobbyists are paying their bills we'll never have a savior up on Capitol Hill. Part of being a participating member of a democratic state is this healthy hope to see the perfect person in charge of the country. That desire is good. We should always aim for perfection, but we will never hit the bullseye. We know what we're getting when we elect a man to office. We're getting a man – not a superhuman, not a magician, and certainly not a savior.

All of our problems will not disappear on Inauguration Day when we can watch the new president walk right across that reflection pool in D.C. But we do our part to work for a better country here on this fallen Earth.

Webb's song ends with this reminder:

you can render unto Caesar everything that's his
you can trust in his power to come to your defense
it's the way of the world, the way of the gun
it's the trading of an evil for a lesser one
so don't hold your breath or your vote until
you think you've finally found a savior up on Capitol Hill

A population of pundits

A large part of the problem Obama's camp is experiencing is the backlash of a culture built on 24-hour news coverage, everyman blogging, and high-speed media coverage. These days, within an hour of any event, literally millions of people across the globe have seen it, heard it, and commented on it. Aside from the endless stream of cable news networks and print and online pundits, Jolene McGuillicutty from Nowhere, Nebraska and her sixteen Oprah buddies can proliferate their highly thought-out, unbiased, and oh-so-expert opinions in minutes.

We've been trained in this hypermedia speed-info culture to lap up every gaffe and foible and spit out our own unsolicited criticism. Abraham Lincoln may have blinked uncontrollably; Martha Washington may have worn last year's fashions; and Thomas Jefferson might have said a thousand stupid things between speeches. And no one cares. Today, if Michelle Obama throws on unflattering shoes made in a sweat shop, her husband's government is compromised.

I would love to see the cable news culture crash and the online punditry fall apart, but it's not going to happen. We're stuck where we are for the moment. The very fact that I'm writing an editorial (alongside hundreds of editors across the country) after one week of a new administration speaks to our culture of instant personal gratification. But it's my job. And there's a place for it.

The way I see it, we can bemoan our culture and our president all we want, or we can work with the institutions we have and pray for our leaders. Barack, if you happen to read this by some great chance, I'm pulling for you. Turn a blind ear to the chatter and spend more time on your knees than on someone else's back. Drink some tea. Play with your daughters. I already have a Saviour.

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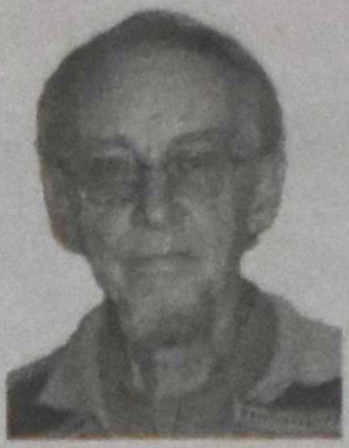
Longing for the City of God



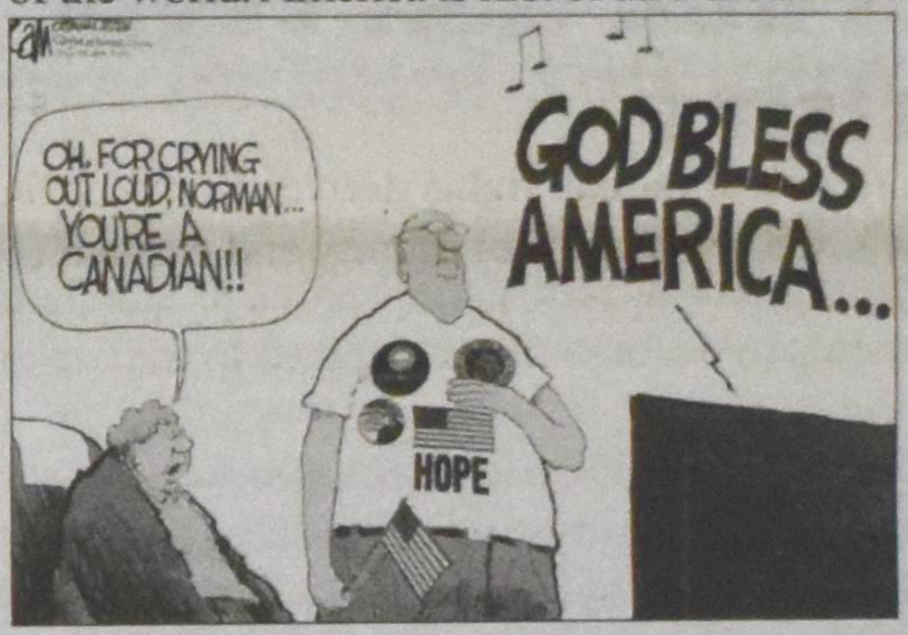
Bert Witvoet

There were many highlights at the inauguration of Barack Hussein Obama. There was the speech itself, which majored in hope, not a bad quality to bring before the people of America. There was the fine down-to-earth poetry of Elizabeth Alexander, the wondrous performance of "It's a gift to be simple," by a quartet of virtuoso players, the prayer of Rev. Joseph Lowery ending in the unforgettable rhyme about the various races. And then there was the hauntingly frilly and broken-up rendition of "My Country, 'Tis of Thee" by Aretha Franklin.

The days following I kept on hearing in my mind the first few lines of "My Country, 'Tis of Thee." It's one of my favourite national hymns. Although the tune is the same, the lyrics beat "God save the Queen" any time.

My country, 'tis of thee,
Sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing;
Land where my fathers died,
Land of the pilgrims' pride,
From every mountainside let freedom ring!

To have a descendant of slaves sing about her "sweet land of liberty" is nothing short of miraculous. Flashing through my mind were images of immigrants arriving on Ellis Island, the Statue of Liberty welcoming the poor and huddled masses from all corners of the world. America is first of all a dreamland. America has the mythical stature of being the land of freedom, some of it deserved, some of it not (think of slavery, think of slums). Still, it's wonderful when a country can inspire hope in the hearts of people all over the world.



Another country

But then I read Hebrews 11, the chapter about the so-called heroes of faith. They, too, dreamt of a sweet land of liberty, but it was not the land they lived in. "By faith Abraham … made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country." Abraham was looking beyond Palestine "to the city with foundations [unlike the tents he lived in] whose architect and builder is God." These heroes of faith "did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance, admitting that they were foreigners and strangers on earth…. They were longing for a better country – a heavenly one."

None of these saints got lost in nostalgia about the country they lived in, even if it was the promised land. And we should not lose ourselves in the imperfect glory of our respective homelands. But that's not to say that we can't be patriotic and sing beautiful national anthems, more as a picture of what God wants us to seek longingly than a place of rest. I especially like singing the last verse of "My Country, 'Tis of Thee":

Our fathers' God, to thee,
Author of liberty, to thee we sing;
Long may our land be bright
With freedom's holy light;
Protect us by thy might, great God, our king.

Not far removed from:

God keep our land, glorious and free,
O Canada, we stand on guard for thee.

To the extent that our country's freedom is holy and a result of justice and mercy (stringent requirements!), we may actually embrace our land as an image of the city whose architect and builder is God.

Letters

Readers respond to: *Is freedom from poverty a human right?*

In the Jan. 12 issue of CC we asked readers to comment on whether freedom from poverty is a human right. It's not a phrase that was used in the past. The Canadian Bill of Rights, first introduced in 1960, talks about freedom of religion, freedom of speech, freedom of assembly and of association, and freedom of the press. Later on international statements have expanded on these rights to include the right to "an adequate standard of living." We asked readers to write one or two paragraphs in response to the statement that "freedom from poverty is a human right." We have received the following responses:

It depends

In response to your request re: poverty two thoughts come to mind:

1. What is poverty and when does one experience it? And in connection with that, freedom from poverty is, in my opinion, first of all my own responsibility.

2. A statement from my growing up years: "He who cannot look after himself does not deserve to be suffering from poverty."

John Jan Suk,
Mississauga, Ontario

Against God's will

Poverty is a rather general term that covers a wide range of interpretations. I personally regard my monthly cheque from the Christian Reformed Pension Fund as the fund's expressed wish to keep my economic situation below the poverty line. However, Wikipedia defines poverty as the deprivation of common necessities such as food, clothing, shelter and safe drinking water. And according to that definition I live twenty-five stories above the poverty line.

It is my opinion that the Bible, which we call God's Word, not only condemns the existence of poverty, but in many places fulminates against the presence of poverty. One cannot read for example the prophecy of Micah and not notice God's anger about the prevalence of poverty in Israel at that time. Not only is it a human right to have access to the necessities of life, it is also God's will for all living creatures.

Carl Tuyl,
Toronto, Ontario

Poverty does not lead to shalom

As Christians, our view of human rights derives from our faith that we are created in God's image. As such, we are persons of dignity and entitled to be treated with respect. God's purpose for us as image bearers is to experience and promote shalom.

Poverty, which often entails lack of adequate food, shelter, clothing, and medical care, does not lead to shalom. Still, I'm not sure that freedom from poverty is our human *right*. It *is* our human right and responsibility to pursue that freedom, as well as every other freedom that promotes shalom.

The prodigal son was reduced to abject poverty. He was given to feast on the fatted calf, not because it was his right but because it was his father's gift of love.

However, the truth is that most living in poverty do so through no fault of their own. They, too, have the human right to pursue and experience the huge blessing of freedom from poverty and fulfillment of their basic needs. In a world where roughly half its population lives on less than two dollars a day, we have the responsibility to help make that possible, out of love for our God and our neighbor.

Henry Baron,
Grand Rapids, Michigan

Relative or absolute measures?

My view is that we can't define poverty. I dug up the following information from a website:

"Poverty in Canada remains prevalent with some segments of society. The measurement of poverty has been a challenge as there is no official government measure. There is an ongoing debate in Canada about whether a relative measure of poverty or an absolute measure of poverty is more valid.

"Currently, an income inequality measure known as low-income cut-off published by Statistics Canada is frequently used as a poverty rate and is 10.8 per cent as of 2005. It is used by statistics collators in lieu of an official measure, noting that a relative measure results in a higher poverty figure than an absolute one. The Fraser Institute publishes an absolute measure known as the basic needs poverty measure. According to this measure, poverty has declined significantly over the past 60 years and is 4.9 per cent as of 2004. Statistics Canada has refused to endorse any metric as a measure of poverty, including the low-income cut-off it publishes, without a mandate to do so from the federal government.

"In recent times, after a spike in poverty and low-income rates around the 1996 recession, relative poverty has continued to decline. Certain groups experience higher low-income rates. These include families with single-parent mothers, autistics, aboriginals, the mentally ill, the physically handicapped, recent immigrants, and students."

Once you exclude drug users and the groups listed in the last paragraph, there is virtually no poverty in Canada. These listed groups have access to programs, have some rights already and are often the benefactors of charities. Drug users are a totally different problem (too complex for this discussion). Society is in need of more responsibilities, not more rights.

Harry Boessenkool,
Surrey, British Columbia

An international human right

Freedom from poverty goes beyond income security. It is a human right that has long been reflected in key international human rights mechanisms.

Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that "Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control." These rights have been reaffirmed in other international human rights agreements – in 1966, 1979 and in 1989.

Poverty is a condition that violates these human rights. Poverty impedes people's access to the basic resources necessary for well-being, including adequate and sufficient food and clothing, as well as safe and appropriate housing. Poverty robs people of their self-esteem. It manifests itself in shame, doubt and fear. A life free from poverty is about more than material comfort – it is a life with dignity.

Karri Munn-Venn, Ottawa, Ontario
CPJ's socio-economic policy analyst.

A "right" by grace

In the dining hall of Alcatraz, there hangs a dour sign: "You have a right to food, shelter, clothing and medical attention. Everything else is a luxury." There is no recognition at Alcatraz that the "food" was often unpalatable glop or a dry bologna sandwich. Thus end your human rights when you are in prison.

So … is relief from poverty a human right?

If we answer biblically, the answer is "No." We, the fallen people, have no ***rights*** at all. All we deserve is condemnation. That we get more, much more, is simply ***grace*** bought by Jesus' sacrifice. What changes that "No" to a "Yes" is this: we are now a people of grace; so whatever we have is an undeserved luxury (as in Alcatraz).

CRC campus minister Andre Basson recently preached a sermon in which he said that grace isn't grace unless it is given away. There we go with our carefully harvested luxuries. If someone has two coats and another has none…. That is true not only of coats, but of food, shelter, medical care and any other human need as well. By that very fact of grace, the poor have a right, as fellow humans under grace, to share in the grace we experience so boundlessly every day. Not a right demanded from God, but a right to say to the rich, "share."

Coby Veenstra,
St. Catharines, Ontario

See David T. Koyzis' response to poverty question on page 6

What do you think?

We have just come through an ugly world event: the war between Israel and Hamas. At this moment there is a ceasefire. But nobody thinks that this spells the end of the conflict in the Middle East. Our question to you readers this time is: "Do you think Israel was justified in responding to the actions of Hamas the way it did?" Please write one or two paragraphs in which you highlight your thoughts and feelings about this sad reality. We will publish responses in the March 9 issue.

BW

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Perspective

Moments in Hospital Chaplaincy

Read: John 3:16 - 21

The room is half empty, but the eyes on the faces of those who are in attendance are emptier than the room. These are Alzheimer patients, many no longer aware of themselves or of their surroundings. Yet the chaplain holds weekly services for them. The chaplain begins the service with a prayer. Then she turns around and fiddles with some knobs on the CD player, and the sound of an old familiar children's hymn begins to fill the room. Softly the chaplain hums the tune. When the music stops she makes it sound again and while she does that she reaches into a vase and takes out a single red rose. She walks among her parishioners holding the rose under every one's nose and invites the people there to smell the flower. While she walks among the few rows of chairs the music continues. It is the record of a children's choir singing: "Jesus loves me, this I know for the Bible tells me so." As she is about to present the rose to the last row of patients, a woman in the first row of chairs all of a sudden joins the choir. Her voice unsteady and quavering but nevertheless clearly audible makes as it were a confession: "Jesus loves me this I know for the Bible tells me so." A smile that could light up a dark night appears on the chaplain's face. She concludes the service with a benediction. Raising her hands she says: "Jesus loves you all. Amen"

Prayer

Holy Father, we know of your love. Even when our mind would be clouded and our memory begins to fail, your love continues unabated. In that certainty we live with grateful hearts.

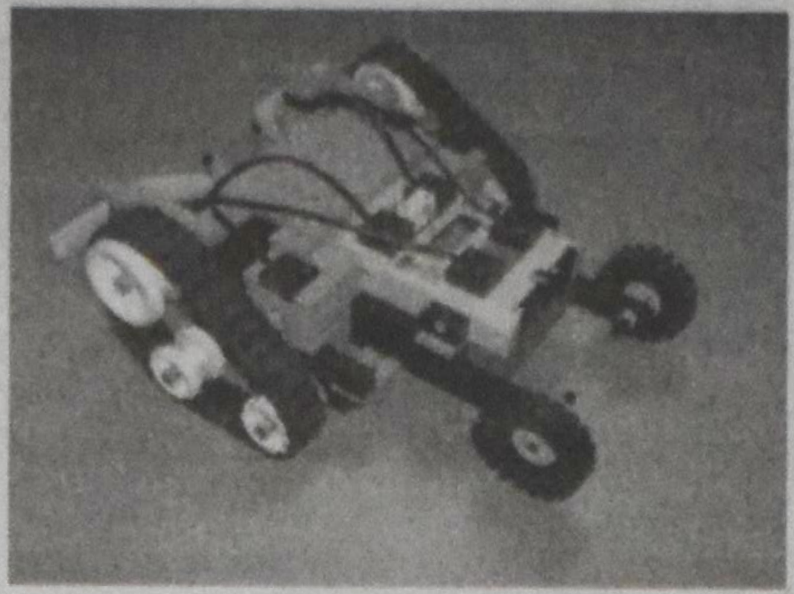
Carl D. Tuyl *(ctuyl@rogers.com) is a retired CRC minister living in Toronto.*

Technically Speaking

Derek Schuurman

Some thoughts about robots

Ever since I was a child, I thought robots were cool. In high school some friends and I built a simple robot for a science fair. The robot was propelled by a windshield-wiper motor and covered with blinking lights. Students in my first year programming class appear to have a lot of fun writing programs to control a roving Lego robot. Some of my own research also deals with topics relating to computer and robot vision systems.



Popular culture also has a fascination with robots. Some of the robots portrayed in the movies have been benevolent and amusing robots like C3PO and R2D2 in *Star Wars,* or the iconic "Robby the Robot" from the1950's movie *The Forbidden Planet.* And of course, there was the likable "Commander Data" from *Star Trek.* More recently, the movie *Wall-E* portrayed a cute little robot who somehow managed to communicate a wide range of different emotions using the pair of stereo cameras perched on his head.

On the other hand, many of the robots depicted in stories have been much more ominous and threatening. Already in the 19th century, the story of Mary Shelley's Frankenstein tells the tale of a creature who is brought to life and who ultimately turns on its creator. Another19th-century book called *Erewhon* by Samuel Butler describes a land where machines were banned because of the widespread belief that they were dangerous and "… that the machines were ultimately destined to supplant the race of man." Isaac Asimov wrote a series of stories about robots in which he introduced the notion of the "Three Laws of Robotics" which were programmed into robots to ensure they don't turn on their creators. However, interesting things happen when situations arise that cause conflicts between these laws.

Survival of the fittest?

The threat of robotics continues to capture the imagination of more contemporary writers and filmmakers. Many movies depict scenarios about how robots will turn on us and ultimately become a threat to humanity. The movie *2001: A Space Odyssey* introduces an intelligent talking computer named HAL who turns on his human operators. Other more recent films like *Terminator, I Robot*, and *The Matrix* have painted a grim picture of a future where machines have turned against their creators and seek to destroy humanity. The *Battlestar Gallactica* series also depicts a future where robots (or "Cylons") have turned on humanity. The phrase "resistance is futile" that was used by the alien Borg in the popular *Star Trek* series communicated the futility of resisting assimilation into the massive Borg "collective."

These recent examples from popular culture illustrate a postmodern view of technology, one which views technology with despair. In essence, this view predicts that technology will continue to advance and ultimately pose a threat to humanity. The former chief scientist at Sun Microsystems, Bill Joy, wrote a sobering article entitled "Why the Future Doesn't Need Us." In it he identifies several technological dystopias, including the scenario where robots advance and compete with humans to the point where "biological humans would be squeezed out of existence." Some see this as the inevitable evolutionary outcome of "survival of the fittest" as humans are eventually supplanted by stronger robots. Daniel Wilson, a robot researcher, took a more humorous look at these fears in a recent book entitled *How To Survive a Robot Uprising: Tips on Defending Yourself Against the Coming Rebellion.* In this book he warns that "any machine could rebel, from a toaster to a Terminator." His book is complete with practical advice on how to survive and evade roaming robot predators.

Need for discernment

Although I don't lay awake worrying about roaming robot predators, there are many ethical issues associated with the ongoing applications for robotics. An example is the development of autonomous robot weapon systems that could be used to locate and destroy targets without human intervention. Although government has been "given the sword," it is problematic to allow autonomous robots to wield that sword. Another debatable application for robots is in the area of "personal care" and "child-minding" robots. Using a robot to vacuum the floor is one thing, but relying on robots to provide personal care for the young, elderly or infirm is no substitute for the genuine human contact we were created to need.

Nevertheless, robots have a valuable role to play in many situations where it is not practical or safe for a human to be present. These include applications such as search and rescue, humanitarian de-mining, hazardous waste clean-up, and space exploration. Another emerging area where robots are providing valuable assistance is in the area of robotic surgery.

I think robots are a wonderful part of the latent potential in creation. Like other aspects of creation, it can also be misdirected and distorted, but we are called to shape and unfold robotic technologies in responsible ways that honour God and that help bring shalom.

To take a look at some of the friendly and non-threatening robot projects of computer science students at Redeemer University College visit: **http://cs.redeemer.ca/robots/**

Dr. Derek Schuurman (dschuurman@cs.redeemer.ca) teaches computer science at Redeemer University College. Derek and his wife, Carina, have four children and they live in Hamilton, Ontario. Web: http://cs.redeemer.ca/derek/

Response to poverty question . . . *continued from page 5*

Beyond deliberation

There can be no doubt that lacking sufficient means to secure food, clothing and shelter for oneself and one's family is not a good thing. Nevertheless, the language of rights is probably not the best way to address the issue. Possession of a right presupposes an obligation to protect that right. To protect the right to free speech simply requires that government refrain from efforts at censorship. To protect freedom of religion necessitates that government not interfere with the activities of churches, mosques, synagogues and their members, unless they directly threaten the public welfare. These are things that a government can readily do, in that enshrining such rights sets boundaries limiting its actions.

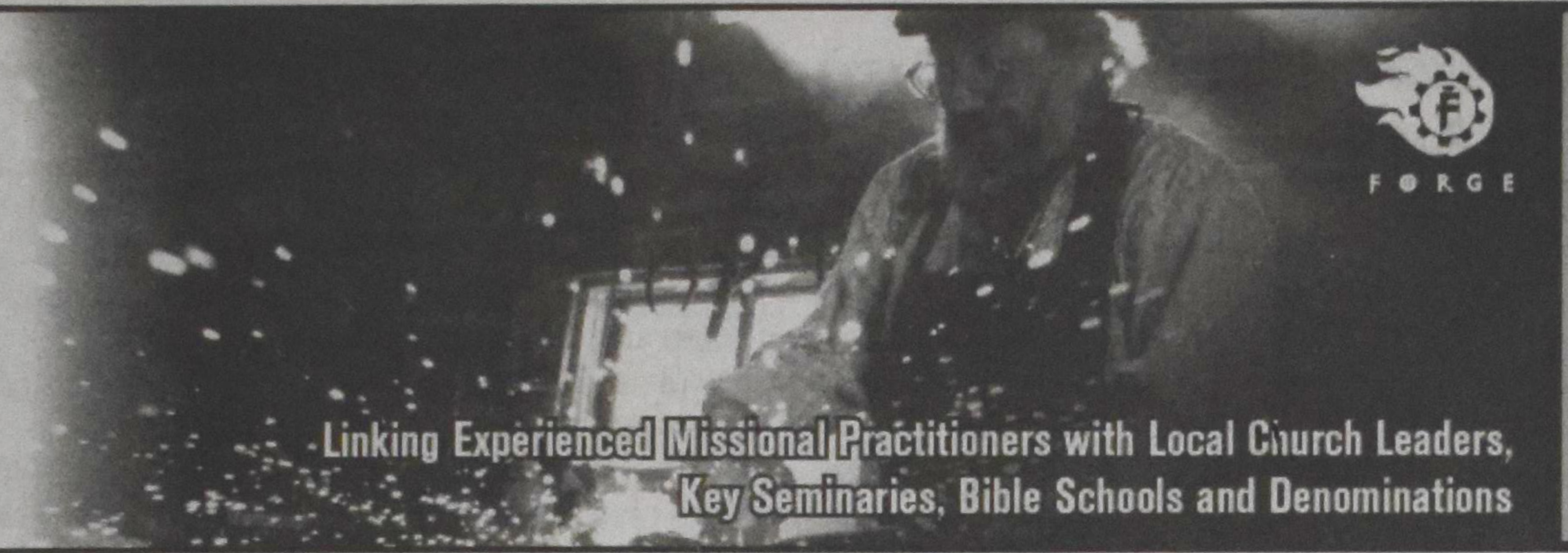
Nevertheless, there is a tendency nowadays to overextend the language of rights, thereby placing certain issues beyond the deliberative processes proper to ordinary politics. By claiming a *right* to something, however contestable that claim might be, one in effect denies the legitimacy of any and all opposition. If the claimed right is deemed justifiable, that is, subject to enforcement by a court, it is removed from the sphere of representative government and becomes subject to an unelected tribunal on which there are insufficient checks.

Government efforts to alleviate poverty are laudable, as long as it does not thereby overextend itself. However, given that such efforts will undoubtedly require expenditure of funds raised by taxes, this is exactly the sort of issue that should be debated and decided in a representative body and not by a court. One recalls the protest of the Americans more than two centuries ago that they were being taxed by a parliament in which they were not represented. It would be dangerous to put a court in the position of imposing taxes and mandating expenditures.

Government should indeed address poverty, but through the ordinary political process and not in the language of rights.

David T. Koyzis, Hamilton, Ontario

DEEPENING MISSIONAL LEADERSHIP



Forge Canada will be hosting more events across Canada in the near future. In addition, it hosts ongoing missional training networks in various cities across Canada and is currently seeking to partner with seminaries. For more information about what this new and compelling organization is up to, see www.forgecanada.ca.

God's mission is your church: *Re-thinking our evangelistic approach*

Geoff Vander Molen

The language we use to describe our churches speaks volumes. In the 1960s and 70s, there was a great deal of talk about church renewal. Then, the church literature of the 70s and 80s focused on church growth. During the late 80s and into the 90s, the conversation often targeted church effectiveness and the development of strategies for ever-elusive church health. While all of these have been helpful periods in the history of the recent church, one of the inherent bi-products has been the invasion of a dogged pragmatism into the minds of Christian leaders in North America.

Dr. Craig Van Gelder

These observations were all part of a presentation made by Dr. Craig Van Gelder on January 23 at Southside Community Church in Surrey, BC. The day-long seminar was hosted by a brand new organization called Forge Canada. The product of a marriage between Forge Australia (led by Alan Hirsch) and the Missional Training Network, Forge Canada is a fledgling organization seeking to provide a range of ministry leadership opportunities at a grass roots level. The goal of Forge Canada is to stimulate church leaders with new and thoughtful ways to reach Canadian homes and neighbourhoods with the gospel.

Dr. VanGelder spoke to this particular gathering, which included more than 20 CRC leaders, about the importance of developing a missional ecclesiology. VanGelder invited leaders to develop a mission rooted in the mission God already has in place. "For too long we have thought that the church has a mission in this world for God," says VanGelder. "Now it's time we began to think about the fact that God's mission in this world has a church."

VanGelder invited church leaders to think through a Trinitarian understanding of church leadership and mission. VanGelder helped participants understand how their Western understanding of the Trinity has produced a view of the Church as primarily being about those who are called, gathered and sent by God into the world. While this paradigm has produced effective and dynamic ministry, participants were invited to expand their thoughts by considering the impact of an Eastern view of the Trinity.

This view sees God primarily as relational – inviting the reconciled world into full communion. The result? The emergence of an ecclesiology that emphasizes the church as a relational community rooted in diversity and living in mutuality. "Rooting our thinking about the church in Trinitarian thought allows us to get beyond the pragmatism that is so prevalent, and to discover how we can participate in God's redemptive work in the world," says VanGelder.

In the words of another missionary, Paul, we are letters from Christ, "written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God" (II Cor. 3:3). In that sense, we can take a bit of the pressure off our actions, and focus instead on who we are as a community of believers.

All in all, "missional" might turn out to be far more than simply the catchphrase of our day.

Geoff Vander Molen is the minister at Hillside Community Church. He lives in Calgary.

One of the best hand and skin treatments money can buy

For too long, farmers have been stereotyped as coverall-sporting rubber-boot wearers. The real trademark of farmers is rough, chapped hands.

Washing udders and other barn and outdoor chores can take their toll. Cold weather only aggravates the problem – red, wrinkled and inflamed-looking knuckles and fingers.

Last week I saw a dairy farmer with such horrible-looking hands. His hands can best be described as three times extra large with deep creases and cracks imbedded with brown stuff – uh, harsh chemicals. It looks like he's been putting too much brown udder wash liquid in the water. I don't know. He has a small herd (35 cows) so he's not overworked.

It sends a bad message for the dairy industry. If he doesn't take care of his hands, what else is neglected?

When I saw those hands, I immediately thought of my mother. She was very strict when it came to personal hygiene. You didn't go out looking rough and unkempt. Our hands were kept soft and chap-free with glycerine. Yes, glycerine!

We spelled it *glycerine* when I was a kid. Now it's *glycerin* (that's the American spelling). It's a commercial product whose principal component is glycerol. Mother would look at our hands and know when it was time "to do them with glycerine." Before bedtime my sisters and I would have to soap our hands and wrists and make them really soapy. She would then pour a few drops of glycerine on our hands, and we'd have to work that in really well, especially the wrists. It could sting a bit. Then she'd give us a towel and we'd wipe the soap into the towel. We couldn't just wash the soap off with water because that defeated the purpose – the glycerine would be washed off. Mother always kept a bottle in the medicine cabinet. She would regularly do her hands. I never saw Mother with rough hands.

Not milking cows now, my hands don't need the regular glycerine treatment. I make sure I always wear winter mitts or gloves when I'm out in the cold. My hands get a treat a few times each winter.

The condition of the hands depends on the care you give them. For many people, especially those who do manual work, the hands are the most overworked and ill-used part of the body. They are exposed to all kinds of wear and tear due to the effects of temperature, climate, frequent wetting, and onslaught of harsh chemicals.

For some folks, like the big-hands dairy farmer, care of the hands is often completely overlooked. If he spent a few minutes a week on his hands, he'd look and feel a lot better. And I'm sure his wife and kids would appreciate it.

Proverbs 13:14 and 15 says a little about work, hands and fools. *People can get many good things by the words they say; the work of their hands also gives them many benefits.*

Fools think they need no advice, but the wise listen to others. The wise listen to others. It's good to listen to what others say.

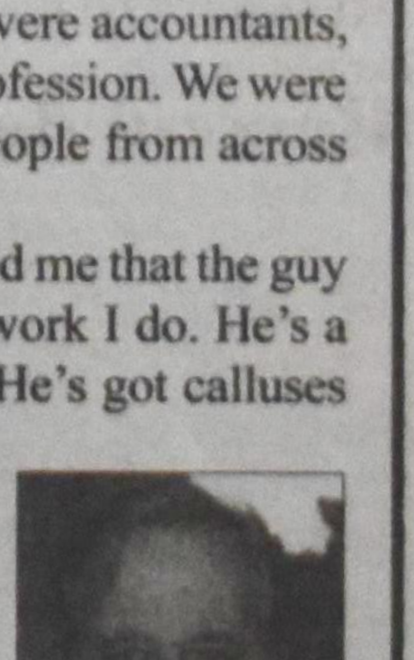
Glycerine is a by-product of the soap making process. It is a humectant, meaning it attracts moisture to your skin. It is a neutral, sweet tasting, colorless, thick liquid. It has many uses including making natural soap. Pure glycerine is one of the very best skin and hand treatments that money can buy. It's cheap ($3.43 for a 100 ml bottle at a local drug store) and it works.

I have to chuckle, thinking back to an incident 30 years ago. I was on the board of the local branch of the Victorian Order of Nurses (VON). I was a busy dairy farmer in those days. The annual meeting that year was held at the Chateau Laurier in Ottawa. Most of the 300 delegates from across Canada were accountants, lawyers, bankers and people in the health care profession. We were assigned seats at tables so we would sit with people from across Canada – not with anyone from our board.

At the lunch break, our director of nursing told me that the guy sitting next to me had asked her what kind of work I do. He's a dairy farmer. Why do you ask?" she had said. He's got calluses on his hands!" he remarked.

At least I didn't have them rough, cracked, chapped and looking like paws – only callused.

The glycerine had done its work.



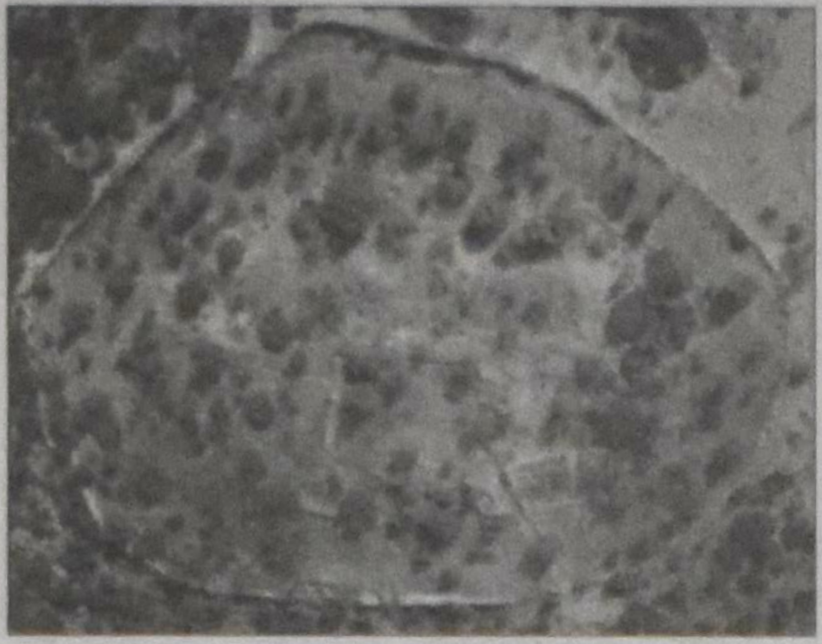
Maynard van der Galien farms at Renfrew, Ont. He was on the board of the VON and Carefor for 31 years, retiring last December.

Older than the Dead Sea Scrolls:

Remains of fortified city found in Israel

Marian Van Til

ELAH VALLEY, Israel – Israel's Elah Valley, which runs along modern Highway 38 southwest of Jerusalem, is the site where David slew Goliath with a well-aimed smooth stone, according to 1 Samuel 17. It is an area that has garnered attention in recent months. And it will be of ongoing interest to biblical archaeology buffs.



Last summer, in his first season working at Khirbet Qeiyafa just above the valley, archeologist Yosef Garfinkel and his team from Hebrew University discovered a fortified Israelite city from what is known as the Iron Age IIa (1000-900 B.C.).

Qeiyafa lies between the ancient biblical cities of Azekah and Socoh (Joshua 15:35; 1 Samuel 17:1). It is just 6 ½ miles from the Philistine city of Gath, described as Goliath's home in 1 Samuel 17:4, and it was probably a fortified border town between Philistia and Judah.

Excavations in what is known as Area B, which includes the western portion of the city wall, have revealed a four-chambered gatehouse and two adjacent buildings. There is a fortification wall made up of two connected concentric walls with a space in between them (known as a "casemate wall"– see photo).

Renovations made in the Hellenistic period (332-63 B.C.) blocked off parts of the gate and walls with smaller stones, but the original Iron Age gate was built of huge stones (megaliths) laid out in the shape of two inward-facing "E's" to make four chambers. The construction of such massive fortifications would have required the administration and resources that only a king could have provided, says Dorothy Resig of *Biblical Archaeology Review*.

Inside the gate it is easy to distinguish between the larger, shaped Iron Age stones and the smaller rock constructions from hundreds of years later. The site was built and abandoned early in Iron Age II and was not occupied again until the Hellenistic period, making it very clear that the original site was built and fortified by King David, says Resig.

Oldest inscription yet found

An even more exceptional find was an ostracon (an ancient piece of broken pottery that functioned like notepaper), discovered in one of the two buildings adjacent to the gatehouse. It may have a lot to tell about David's kingdom, says Resig.

Barnea Levi Selavan, co-director of Foundation Stone, a developmental and educational organization supporting the dig, is a little more vague, though he agrees that the find "supports the general background of the book of Samuel and the book of Chronicles describing a Kingdom functioning 3,000 years ago in Judea."

The ostracon bears five lines of text totaling 50 letters, the longest inscription of its kind ever found. The inscription, like the buildings, date to the early tenth century, says Prof. Yoself Garfinkel. It is written in proto-Canaanite script but the language is Hebrew. According to Garfinkel, the words "don't do," "king," "judge" and "servant" are all legible.

Not only is the ostracon inscription the longest ever found, it is also the earliest, predating the rest by 100 years or more. It is about 3,000 years old, thus a thousand years older than the Dead Sea Scrolls. Selavan further describes the ostracon. "It is written with ink and was written by a trained scribe, as a communication. This is extremely rare. There is only three other inscriptions that might be in the same league and some of them are just scribble."

Garfinkel and his team will continue to work at the site indefinitely. They estimate that they've excavated only around five per cent of the site so far.

Pro-life movement under Obama

WASHINGTON, D.C. – (Crosswalk) Tens of thousands (200,000) marched down Constitution Avenue in Washington, D.C. the day after Barack Obama's presidential inauguration. They were not celebrating. They were peaceful protesters marking the 36th anniversary of the Roe v. Wade decision.

An estimated 50 million babies have been aborted since the infamous Supreme Court decision in 1973. This year brought a more somber context to the March than in past years, as pro-life groups have lost their ally in the White House. Former U.S. President Bush used to phone-in to the rallies held before the march, offering words of encouragement and support. President Barack Obama, who was invited to speak at the rally but did not accept, by phone or otherwise.

"Would nullify every pro-life law"

In contrast to his predecessor, the new president has promised to back the sweeping Freedom of Choice Act (FOCA), which "would nullify every pro-life law, from parental notification laws to bans on federal funding of abortion," said Wendy Wright, president of Concerned Women for America, according to the Christian Post.

FOCA would also override pro-life gains such as the Born Alive Act, which protects infants who survive an abortion, and the partial-birth abortion ban. Funding has already been restored to international family-planning clinics that promote abortion or provide counseling or referrals about abortion services.

Despite losses at the polls in 2008, the number of pregnancy resource centers has continued to rise in recent years, helping women to seek pro-life alternatives to abortion. Networks such as Care Net and Crisis Pregnancy Center continue to grow.

Heartbeat International, one of the oldest groups, has started and supported almost 1,100 centers, maternity homes and adoption agencies throughout the United States and other countries, 410 of which have ultrasound equipment to let women see their unborn children. Heartbeat estimates that these kinds of centers save an estimated 2,000 babies each week.

"Members of Congress need to hear from the women we serve. I am grateful they have such positive things to say about pregnancy center help," said Heartbeat President Peggy Hartshorn. on the association's Web site.

The combined legislative efforts and personal interaction with women facing tough choices has helped kick the rate of abortions to its lowest level since 1973, when Roe v. Wade effectively legalized abortion and overrode most state laws against it. Still, the numbers are staggering: an estimated 1.2 million women aborted a child in 2005, according to the Guttmacher Institute.

"I do not believe the pro-life movement has failed overall, in the sense that what we have been doing is wrong, or that what we have been aiming for is hopeless," said Maria McFadden Maffucci, editor of the Human Life Review.

Nonetheless, as those thousands united for life marched down the streets of D.C., it seems like a new era has begun in the pro-life movement. This effort includes congressional members, but also enthusiastic college students, pregnancy center volunteers, and post-abortive women willing to share their regret. With the political tide against them, this 200,000 member crowd is finding new ways to communicate their message, through high-profile videos put out by CatholicVote.org and continued interpersonal ministry.

Opposition to polygamy may fail

Marian Van Til

OTTAWA – The recent arrest of polygamists in Bountiful, B.C., "marks the start of an official attempt to prevent and penalize multi-partner marriage," says Andrea Mrozek, manager of research and communications at the Institute of Marriage and Family Canada. Mrozek was writing in the *Toronto Sun*, Jan. 19. Her analysis also appears on the marriage and family institute's website and at <christianity.ca.>

Mrozek predicts that in the current social climate, "those of us opposed to polygamy will most likely lose."

To understand why, one has to understand how marriage has evolved, says Mrozek. She notes that from pre-history to the 20th century, marriage has been generally understood "as a child-centered institution between one man and one woman." Conventional marriage protects woman and children and assumes that men will support and care for their children.

Now, the picture is very different, Mrozek notes. "Today, marriage is chiefly based on love and weddings are an opportunity to have a party. We (well, the Supreme Court) already agreed marriage should not be limited by sexual orientation. What justification is there now to limit the number of partners?"

She explains, "We already collectively accepted it needn't be for life and it needn't be between members of the opposite sex. If you are against polygamy, but in favour of same sex marriage, you're between a rock and a hard place. It looks like hypocrisy to extend marriage to everyone – everyone except, polygamists and say, polyamorists.

Mrozek doesn't need to precisely define "polyamory"; she calls it "another trend in collective relationships." But it is "one more good reason polygamy ought not be legal." Children, she notes, do best raised by their mom and dad. "Creative marraige arrangements" that result in children having multiple "parents" is a form of "experimentation" on children, Mrozek asserts. Such relationships hurt children, women and families.

Such "marriages" will also result in a fiscal nightmare for the country, she predicts. "How much will parental leave cost if it involves 25 wives and 100 children? Divorce court? 'Bogged down' won't be words big [or] strong [enough] to describe the mess."

So, what to do? Without reverting to a time when children born out of wedlock were stigmatized, Mrozek says that Canadians who want to uphold marriage "need to speak with a powerful, unified voice against [polygamy], even if that means unusual alliances. Those who advocated for gay marriage often said it would not lead to legalized polygamy, which they opposed. They, secular atheists and feminists, must join hands with the religious faithful and the traditional."

The Institute of Marriage and Family Canada (IMFC) "conducts, compiles and presents the latest and most accurate research to ensure that marriage and family-friendly policy are foremost in the minds of Canada's decision makers." It sees the family as the foundation of society because the health of children, communities and nations depends on strong families. Therefore, the aim of governmental and social policy should be to support the family.

The institute has compiled a "Family Index," a collection "that catalogues social science findings on family matters obtained from journals, books, and government surveys." It can be found at <www.imfcanada.org>.

No unity among UK churches

LONDON (Ekklesia) – Long-held ambitions for ecclesiastical unity are "unrealistic" and are being replaced in practice by local action, national church leaders in the United Kingdom said recently.

The heads of the Anglican, Baptist, Methodist, Roman Catholic and United Reformed Churches responded to questions put to them by the *Church Times* and the *Baptist Times* during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, Jan. 18-25.

The findings appear to support predictions made by the think tank Ekklesia in 2006 in its book *Faith and Politics After Christendom.*

The leaders involved were the Church of England's Archbishop of Canterbury Dr. Rowan William, Baptist Union general secretary Rev. Jonathan Edwards, Methodist Church general secretary Dr. Martyn Atkins, Cardinal Cormac Murphy O'Connor (head of the Roman Catholic Church in England), and Rev. Roberta Rominger, general secretary of the United Reformed Church .

Jonathan Edwards & Peter Burns

They all acknowledged a loss of impetus in efforts to bring about unity. Martyn Atkins talked of "less enthusiasm for unity as an end in itself"; Cardinal Murphy-O'Connor spoke of "a slowing down of progress" despite their own commitment; and Rowan Williams said, "You won't find much interest in what you might call the 'negotiating' side of unity."

Top-down strategies don't work

Instead, each spoke of an increase in "partnership of purpose and action." Jonathan Edwards (named after the great 18th century Reformed apologist and preacher) said, "Baptists are more involved in working with other denominations than ever before." And Methodist Martyn Atkins said that there is "greater enthusiasm for focused ecumenical action, such as community projects." He added, "I think this kind of focus is much more helpful. We can express our unity in constructive ways."

The leaders admitted that most people in the pews are not enthusiastic about ecclesiastical unity. As Archbishop Rowan Williams put it, there is "an uncomfortable gap between national bodies and local enthusiasm."

None of the leaders see a dismantling of denominational structures in the near future, but Baptist Jonathon Edwards was the most critical of the present situation. "We have to make the best of what we've been given. The inherent division of the contemporary Church is painful and time-wasting, and it fundamentally distracts from the Good News."

Rowan Williams acknowledged, "The truth is that top-down strategies for institutional union are very unlikely to work in the near future any better than they have in the recent past. Prayer and silence and action together are the things that change us, and even change the world."

Jonathan Bartley, co-director of the think tank Ekklesia and author of the book *Faith and Politics After Christendom* said in response, "Post-Christendom is clearly bringing with it new forms of co-operation between Christians based not on theology or doctrine, but on action and the way they live. In many respects, this resonates with the experience of early Christians, who saw their faith far more in terms of what they did."

End Church-State ties in Spain:
Evangelicals want religious 'neutrality'

MADRID (CNA) – Evangelical leaders in Spain have encouraged the country's Socialist government to abolish the special status the Catholic Church enjoys with the government.

The Federation of the Evangelical Entities of Spain has called for legislation that would make the state "neutral with regard to all religious beliefs" and promote a secular approach to government.

The executive secretary of the federation, Mariano Blazquez Burgo, asked the government to pass a law on the "neutrality" and "laicity" of the State, in order to establish a common equality among all the churches that exist in the country. "We are asking for two laws: one on religious entities and the other on neutrality, laicity, a word which does not frighten me," Blazquez told reporters recently during the celebration of the 130th anniversary of the evangelical church of the city of Gijon.

According to the daily paper *La Nueva España*, evangelicals want the State "to be neutral with regards to all religious beliefs, by advancing laicity, and also with a statute of equality shared by all the churches established in Spain."

"Not privileges for the churches, but a common statute for all religious entities that is clear and just in rights and obligations," Blazquez stated, adding that during the Spanish Civil War, evangelicals showed "sympathy for the Republic, saying they were spiritually liberating our nation."

Since taking power, the government of President Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero has made it a priority to remove any religious expression from public life and to impose its own moral formation on students through the Education for Citizens course, which thousands of parents have rejected because of its secular and ideological nature.

Christian deaths mount in Eritrean prisons

LOS ANGELES (Compass Direct) – Three Christians incarcerated in military prisons for their faith have died in the past four months in Eritrea, including the death on Jan. 16 of a 42-year-old man in solitary confinement, according to a Christian support organization.

Mehari Gebreneguse Asgedom died at the Mitire Military Confinement center from torture and complications from diabetes. Asgedom was a member of the Church of the Living God in Mendefera. His death followed the revelation this month of another death in the same prison. Mogos Hagos Kiflom, 37, was said to have died as a result of torture he endured for refusing to recant his faith, according to Open Doors.

Incarcerated Christians from throughout Eritrea have been transferred to the Mitire prison in the country's northeast. In 2002 the Eritrean regime outlawed religious activity, except that of Muslims and Orthodox, Catholic and Lutheran Christians.

In October Open Doors learned of the death of Teklesenbet Gebreab Kiflom, 36, who died while imprisoned for his faith at the Wi'a Military Confinement center. Prison commanders refused to give him medical attention for malaria. In June last year 37-year-old Azib Simon also died from untreated malaria. Simon was also tortured.

The confirmed number of Christians who have died while imprisoned for their faith in Eritrea now totals eight.

Mass arrests of outlawed church members

The government of President Isaias Afwerki has stepped up its campaign against the churches it has outlawed, especially evangelicals. That escalation has earned Eritrea a spot on the U.S. Department of State's list of worst violators of religious freedom.

The government arrested 15 members of the Kale-Hiwot Church in Keren on Jan. 11 after arresting 34 members in November. Before Christmas, 49 leaders of unregistered churches in Asmara were rounded up over two weeks. Those included members of the Church of the Living God, Medhaniel Alem Revival Group and the Philadelphia, Kale-Hiwot, Rhema, Full Gospel and Salvation by Christ churches, according to Open Doors. The church leaders' names appeared on a government list of 180 people who were taken from their homes and work places.

In the November sweep, authorities arrested 65 members of the Kale-Hiwot Church in the towns of Barentu and Dekemhare, including 17 women. In Keren and Mendefera, 25 members of the Full Gospel Church were arrested, and 20 Christians belonging to the Church of the Living God in Mendefera and Adi-Kuala were arrested.

By mid-December, a total of 2,891 Christians, including 101 women, had been imprisoned for their faith. Eritrean officials have routinely denied that religious oppression exists in the country, saying the government is only enforcing laws against unregistered churches.

The government has prevented all efforts by independent Protestant churches to register, and people caught worshiping outside the four recognized religious institutions, even in private homes, suffer arrest, torture and severe pressure to deny their faith. The Eritrean Orthodox Church and its flourishing renewal movement has also been subject to government raids.

Prevent discrimination against Christians, says EU's VP

ROME (CNA) – In an interview with an Italian newspaper, the vice-president of the European Parliament said he sees the prevention of discrimination against Christians as an important aspect of his new role in the European Union.

In an interview with *L'Osservatore Romano*, Mario Mauro said that in assuming his new role at the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), religion will play a part. "Although no political problem can be resolved with religion, it is also true that no political problem can be resolved going against religion," he said.

Mauro went on to state that the situation for Christians is most complicated in "Caucasian areas and in the countries of the East."

"In the countries of the former Communist block the problem is centered upon when and how to return the goods and property that belong to the religious communities of these countries. In the nations of the European Union, we find the problem is discrimination, probably more subtle – but often more consistent – which has to do with the right of considering the expression of faith as a factor in public life, and not simply as a private act."

Mario Mauro

Secularism intolerant

Commenting on the dominance of secularism and relativism in Europe, Mauro said, "We are often made to think that both serve to combat intolerance. But if we forget that the religious dimension sees man as the potent factor in the realization of humanity, we run the risk of falling into intolerance ourselves. And this is a very important fact which influences the relationship between religions."

After noting that in many areas of the Middle East Christianity is identified with the West, Mauro pointed out that "in reality in those countries Christian communities have more ancient origins than the current religious majorities."

Overall, Mauro described discrimination against Christians "in the context of the countries that belong to the OSCE, and in particular those of the West," as resulting from "a prejudice that in time becomes more established and ends up becoming a sort of secularism."

Memoirs

Stories of occupation and resistance

*This account by **Machiel Edelman**, whose code name was Dolf, serves as an introduction to a series of five more Second World War stories about Machiel's underground work, as told by his daughter Dineke Poelman-Edelman.*

Machiel Edelman and Diny Karssen

PART I

Reflections on the war years

The war years 1940-1945 were years of extremes in occupied Holland – extremes of joy and sorrow, hope and despair, love and hate, and not least, friendship and treachery. No one asked us whether we enjoyed that state of affairs. No one told us how to live with it. It belonged to the times. That's just how it was.

The early years of the war were marked with despair and sorrow. I shed tears on that memorable day of May 14th when Rotterdam was bombed, tears of powerless rage. I was 22 years old and still lived at home with my parents. We had a large family of 16 children (originally 17) and lived in Bodegraven.

The first weeks of the war we seemed as if stupefied; yes, we literally lived in a state of shock. And then impressions slowly began to reawaken. The occupier remained in the background, but isolated individuals emerged to actively resist.

The Reformed weekly *The Reformation* had already in the '30s warned against National Socialism and the threat to our Christian heritage. Undeterred, it continued to issue warnings. Already in 1940 I read: "Christians, leave your hiding places and put on your uniforms. We are soldiers of Jesus Christ, our King. In his army no one goes on furlough." These were acts of resistance which filled me with the hope that one day the occupation would come to an end. These words also spurred me on not just to sit there but to do something.

Strong bonds

In some ways life just seemed to go on as usual. You went to work, visited family and friends, and you celebrated when there was something to celebrate. Forced employment was the cause for many changes. Young men had to choose: either work for the occupying country or go into hiding. For Jewish people it meant looking for hiding places. Networks were organized of family members who could be trusted, church contacts, friends, colleagues, or sports people. Somehow there developed, under the skin of the visible society, a second community, a community of resisters, of like-minded people who were dependent on each other and had to be able to trust each other one hundred percent.

Friendships for life were forged in an environment so intense and so edge-of-the-knife sharp that years later you wondered how it could possibly have been so. How much stronger was our grief when these friends, these loved ones, were picked up and all too often murdered. Some people left the movement because they could not face that life any more or because of the burden of care for family and loved ones. Others kept on going, like unrelenting terriers pursuing their prey, but with despair, because there was no one else.

Dangerous work

My girlfriend and I also became engaged in that first year of the war. That it would be inconceivable to consider a wedding for the first five years because of the occupation we did not yet know then. Nor did we know that my fiancee, Diny Karssen, would have to go into hiding as well because of my position at the top of the wanted list. Gradually the resistance movement became better organised. And the second community, the "under-the-skin" one, was divided into regions. There was talk of a division of tasks, and the necessary coordination was developed.

When, towards the end of the war, I filled a coordinating role in the Westland and Rijn area, my fiancee urged me to stop this life-threatening and dangerous work. Twice I had been arrested, freed and often barely escaped. "The third time won't be successful, and I will lose you for ever," she reminded me.

But there were so few of us, and we had already lost so many members. Even the memories of the thumbscrews, the intense interrogations, the screaming in the prison cells of the police headquarters, did not keep me from writing back: "What has to be done, has to be done. If I stop now, so many would be cheated. We are all in God's hand." This was an intensely experienced conviction in those days.

No real heroes

The heroes which you encounter in books and films I never really met in those years.

Just brave and trustworthy men and women – friends who encouraged one to keep going despite all the setbacks and betrayal. Betrayal was the reason my own group was almost totally destroyed. My own life was spared thanks to a schoolboy delivering some mail. But the no-holds-barred interrogations were also responsible for disclosing information about our organisation.

When I landed in a cell, just a few days before the liberation, the names and codenames of the entire illegal organisation were known to the occupying power. And yet, unexpectedly, an "angel of the night" appeared, an angel who opened my cell door and ever so calmly let me out.

This time the angel was disguised as a policeman.

If we could have foreseen any of this, we probably would never have started these undertakings. It grew on you, so to speak, and that made it possible to persevere. Did we really get used to it? Is courage something that grows?

After the war the government presented us with a Delft Blue plaque. The caption read: "With sacred fire you were filled, and many saved from being killed." My small daughter confused the first part of this proverb with a well-known Dutch saying and made of it: "Being frugal with fat saved many from being killed." This expression caught on and became a regular saying in our family. Rewards in the form of ribbons and such have always been declined by our organisation.

PART II

Help for Camp Amersfoort

Dineke Poelman

When Uncle Andries was captured and sent to Camp Amersfoort in 1943, his brother Chiel Edelman (Dolf) used his contacts with the Resistance to smuggle packages of illegally acquired food and other goods into the camp. Close to the fence around the airfield where the prisoners were engaged in forced labour stood a house. The occupants of this house in Soesterberg, the van der Wal family, occasionally had the opportunity to exchange a few words with the prisoners.

By this means they were able to find out that the items which the prisoners had most need of were matches, tobacco, cigarettes, soap, and anti-flea products. At first the van der Wal family paid for all these items themselves; at times as much as .1400 guilders a month. For this "work" in which they were engaged, Dolf was able, through his connections in the resistance, to secure for them extra coupons as well as the aforementioned necessities which they then managed to smuggle across the fence.

The house which was some distance from the main road could be reached via a narrow path through the woods.

On a number of occasions Chiel (Dolf) had delivered articles there, and one morning, together with a friend, was again on his way there with a good-sized stack of coupons inside his coat pocket and a large box of matches. The day before, he had delivered a large suitcase full of cigars, cigarettes and tobacco. Without matches those smokes would, of course, be useless.

Approaching the house on their bicycles via the pathway, Dolf and his friends experienced a dreadful shock. In front of the house they saw a police van of the Security Service (SD). They attempted to retreat but could not as they had been noticed by the SD guards. The matches were immediately confiscated, and they were ordered to stand there with raised arms.

At that moment the van der Wal family, who had undoubtedly been betrayed, were being taken prisoner. Even the commander of Camp Amersfoort, Kotalla (later one of the three of Breda) was inside the house.

Dolf and his friend were not immediately searched but did have to wait under guard, separately, until the SD had time for them. They stood there from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m.

Dolf became quite worried because he had a large stack of forbidden coupons inside his coat pocket. How was he going to get rid of this stuff without the guards becoming suspicious? Should he eat them? No, that would be too obvious. If only there was a cavity in the fir tree where he could hide the package. But no such luck either. Anxiously he looked around. He had to hurry. Very soon they would be searched and interrogated by the SD.

Suddenly he had an idea. He began to moan and started rubbing his back pretending

Continued on p. 13

This statue, that represents a prisoner in front of an execution squad, is a reminder to the victims that have fallen in Kamp Amersfoort.

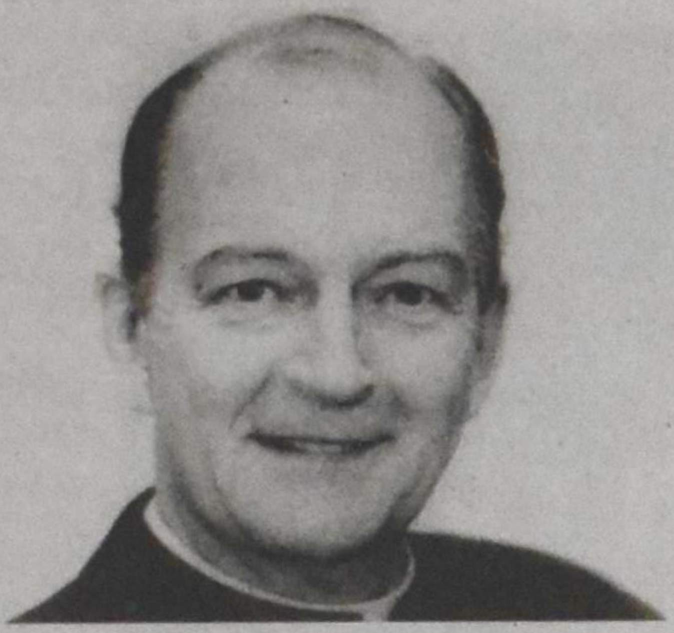
One fist of the stone prisoner is clenched as a sign of powerless anger and of his unbroken will. The statue is placed on a starshaped mosaic with 5 peace pigeons who reflect the five war years. The stone prisoner, with the official name "Prisoner standing in front of the firing squard", is called by the locals "The stone man".

Former prisoner Frits Sieger is the creator of the monument.

Richard John Neuhaus: loved and mourned by many

Harry Antonides

Roman Catholic priest, prolific author, mentor and friend to people in high places and those in humble circumstances, Richard John Neuhaus, was born in Pembroke, Ontario. He died at age 72 in New York City on the morning of January 8, succumbing to the cancer that had attacked him years earlier.



Like his father, he became a minister in the Lutheran Church, serving as pastor of a predominantly black and Hispanic congregation in Brooklyn, N.Y. He was active in the civil rights and anti-war movements, but eventually broke with the Left, partly in protest over the U.S. Supreme Court 1973 *Roe v. Wade* ruling that legalized abortion.

In 1990, he converted to Roman Catholicism and, the following year, was ordained in the priesthood. He explained: "I was 30 years a Lutheran pastor, and after 30 years of asking myself why I was not a Roman Catholic, I finally ran out of answers that were convincing, either to me or to others."

He devoted his energies and eloquence to three main causes: internal church renewal, Protestant-Roman Catholic relations, and the confluence of Christianity and culture.

In 1995, he joined Charles Colson in editing *Evangelicals and Catholics Together: Toward a Common Mission*, a manifesto that occasioned much debate while some claimed that the authors had compromised major teachings

His books

He wrote a number of books about theology, the Church, ecumenism, politics, culture, and death, about which he wrote:

> *Death is the most everyday of everyday things. Death is the warp and woof of existence in the ordinary, the quotidian, the way things are. It is the horizon against which we get up in the morning and go to bed at night, and the next morning we awake to find the horizon has drawn closer.*

The Naked Public Square: Religion and Democracy in America (1984) served as a much-needed stimulus for thinking about politics from a Christian perspective. He paid tribute to "some of the more determinedly Calvinist thinkers who are instrumental in the current renascence of scholarly reflection about public religion in a pluralistic society." (p. 51) He warned that politics cut loose from the Christian religion is barren and will leave politics open to alien, tyrannical ideologies. Or as he put it:

> *The truly naked public square is at best a transitional phenomenon. It is a vacuum begging to be filled.... We have said that conceptually there is no alternative to a* de facto *state religion once traditional religion is driven from the public square....we must attend to actual historical experience. We have witnessed again and again the entrance of the seven devils worse than the first.* (p. 86, 87)

First things

Neuhaus served on the board of the Institute on Religion & Democracy, and he was president of the Institute on Religion and Public Life, the New York think tank that publishes *First Things*, an ecumenical journal "whose purpose is to advance a religiously informed public philosophy for the ordering of society."

Founded in 1990, that magazine became essential reading for all who want to be challenged and informed about all the significant issues of our time. Under Neuhaus's editorship *First Things* has served as a lively meeting place for Evangelicals and Catholics, while it also made room for Jewish scholars.

His regular contributions under the heading "The Public Square: A Continuing Survey of Religion, Culture, and Public Life," consisted of brief commentaries about an amazing range of current events that were always thoughtful, enlightening, and sometimes playful.

Neuhaus was a brilliant polemicist but always magnanimous toward his critics and adversaries. He was unapologetic in his defence of the Christian faith as an indispensable guardian of freedom. He suggested that on that score we may be in for a time of severe testing.

It is fitting for us Protestants to recognize and celebrate this convert to Roman Catholicism as a brother in the faith who was a gifted yet humble servant of Christ. His life and work have much to teach us about living faithfully, and yes even joyfully and exuberantly, in an age of great spiritual confusion and turmoil.

Harry Antonides (hantonides@sympatico.ca) lives in Willowdale, Ontario.

Death Be Not Proud

by John Donne (1572-1631)

DEATH be not proud, though some have called thee
Mighty and dreadfull, for, thou art not so,
For, those, whom thou think'st, thou dost overthrow,
Die not, poore death, nor yet canst thou kill me.
From rest and sleepe, which but thy pictures bee,
Much pleasure, then from thee, much more must flow,
And soonest our best men with thee doe goe,
Rest of their bones, and soules deliverie.
Thou art slave to Fate, Chance, kings, and desperate men,
And dost with poyson, warre, and sicknesse dwell,
And poppie, or charmes can make us sleepe as well,
And better then thy stroake; why swell'st thou then;
One short sleepe past, wee wake eternally,
And death shall be no more; death, thou shalt die.

How to love your enemies

Lynn Marie-Ittner Klammer

I've always thought that "love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you" is one of the hardest Biblical commandments to obey. I'd much rather avoid my enemies, have my enemies realize the error of their ways...or in my less enlightened moments, see my enemies brought low. Loving one's enemies seems not only difficult to accomplish but also foolish. After all, enemies can be dangerous. This Biblical directive doesn't seem to be very realistic, but I learned a lot about this issue over the past summer – and from a quite unlikely place.

I've always considered spiders to be my "enemy." There isn't any other creepy-crawly thing that I can truly say I despise and fear. Having said that, however, this summer I allowed one of the vile, reprehensible creatures to remain on the outside of my kitchen window. I suppose I did it for shock value at first. My kids were horrified at the large, hideous spider on the window, and that of course prompted me to leave him there for the day. As we watched that first night, however, we were enthralled by the skill and mastery of the small creature's activities. The spider would carefully gather up the remains of its web (seeming to actually ingest it), meticulously re-build it, and then spend the remaining darkness of the night hunting its prey. The suspense of watching moths fly so close to their doom was enthralling. Some lucky few were caught and overlooked, while others were captured and wrapped in silk for the spider's later nefarious plans. It was so interesting that I decided to leave it for another night...and then another...until I suddenly looked up to realize that summer had passed and fall was upon us. By the time the cold put an end to our study, we had witnessed a multitude of spiders call our window home. The first spider had mysteriously disappeared soon after the birth of many tiny babies. We watched those grow and slowly disappear as well, until only one was left to weather the cold approach of winter.

From our summer spider show, I learned that a close-up view can be far more revealing than one might expect. Personally, I expected to be horrified with a renewed awareness of the brutal, unredeeming qualities of the spider world. Instead I discovered a new appreciation of my enemy. I learned of their daily struggles and precarious daily existence. I grew to respect their dedication to rebuild an intricate web each night and marveled at the shimmering beauty they seemed to so easily spin from their bodies. Even in the creepy, nightly hunt there was patience and efficiency to be admired. Don't get me wrong, I still consider the spider to be my "enemy". However, now I understand that enemy a bit better and find it difficult to be quite as condemning as I have been in the past.

My human enemies are certainly not of the same calibre as a simple arachnid, but I can't help but wonder if gaining a greater understanding of them might help us both. Perhaps a part of God's plan in instructing us to love our enemies is to nudge us toward that very awareness. Thinking about and praying for my enemies forces me to direct positive thoughts toward them. I find that praying for and trying to love someone that I don't even like naturally seems to burrow through my negative thoughts and feelings, forming a personal connection that makes it difficult to be completely condemning.

So how do I learn to love my enemies? The wisdom in the Biblical instruction is clear – by taking a closer look, not just at what they are but at *who* they really are up close. If we "pray for those who persecute us," we can't help a little warmth within ourselves...even for our "enemies."

Life stages

From Toddlers to Teens
by Denise Dykstra

Learning from the greatest parent

I've been a parent for fourteen years and three months. If you take the ages of all my kids and line them up consecutively, I've parented for more than four and a half decades. I'm a biological mom and an adoptive mom, and recently I spent a couple of years as a foster mom. Yet somehow parenting still seems way out of my league.

Why is it that something so important seems to baffle so many people? Why is it that the one thing we don't need a license to do appears to be the most difficult to grasp? Oh, there are theories regarding parenting, tons of them. But that in itself is a problem. Raising kids is one of those things about which people have loads of differing opinions. We should let our kids learn from their mistakes; we shouldn't be too permissive; we should demand obedience from our children; we shouldn't be too authoritarian; we should force our young ones to finish the food on their plates; we should encourage them to stop eating when they're full. But what if they haven't had something from each of the food groups?

As parents, we always seem to be vulnerable to judgment. The mom in the shopping mall with the screaming child may have just realigned her distraught toddler's dislocated shoulder but the only thing the people around her think is wow, that lady needs to get some control over her kid. I remember a friend telling me how embarrassed she was to be yelling at her five-year-old daughter in public – when the young girl had left her hearing aid at home.

Not without hope

It takes discernment and courage to be a parent. And, I dare say, a good dose of humble pie. Because parenting *is* way out of our league. We are, by nature, imperfect creatures. We don't have the wisdom we need to guide our children's young minds. We're bound to make mistakes, lots of them.

But we aren't without hope. In James 1:5 we are told: "If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you." If we parent alongside God, he'll succeed where we fail. He'll guide, inspire and nurture us when we encounter circumstances too difficult to handle on our own.

That's what this column will be about. Each month I'll cover a different topic and do my best to figure out how to tackle it by walking with the greatest parent of all – our heavenly Father. As a loving parent, God promises that: "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." So we can rest in the confidence that if we walk in a godly direction in our child rearing, the Lord is our helper, and we need not be afraid. (Hebrews 13:5-6)

I'm excited to be a part of the *Christian Courier* team. The week I got an e-mail from Bert Witvoet asking if I wanted to write this column, I was on a Mexican cruise with my husband, Ray. We had a wonderful holiday, spending our time relaxing, rejuvenating and, as vacationers often do, evaluating our work back home. I commented to Ray that I felt it was time for me to look for a new challenge. When I got back to Edmonton and opened up my e-mail inbox, I realized God was way ahead of me. Thankfully, he is when it comes to parenting, too.

Denise Dykstra (dykstras@telus.net) is a stay-at-home mom of five kids – three biological and two adopted – ranging in age from 14 to 3. She is a freelance journalist who lives in Edmonton, Alberta.

More Than a Degree
Janine Siemens

People will judge you and your school

Shortly after my arrival at Redeemer University College in 2004, I realized just how important social interaction is to students and staff there. There was a lot of promotion for events like FROG Olympics, the Harvest Hoe Down, and the Decade Dance. These activities were designed to be helpful ways of meeting people and becoming comfortable in the new environment. However, the flood of events and new faces was intimidating for my introverted self. I hid in my room and retreated to the things I was already familiar with, like chatting with old friends via instant messaging, writing emails, and talking to my parents on the phone. While other freshmen made new friends and entertained themselves in the fall weather, I cracked open my textbooks and started studying. Frustration and self-doubt descended on me after I failed a geography quiz I had studied a dozen hours for. Do I have what it takes to succeed in university? I thought. And how do so many people manage to pull off passing grades when they spend so much time socializing?

Need to prioritize

I recovered from the fluke of failing that first test, and I have since realized that social interaction is a part of the education we are receiving. I've had really good conversations with students and staff, ones that proved to be just as, if not more, educational than what I learned in a classroom or a textbook. However, sometimes I've spent too much time with friends and too little studying. I've realized the importance of scheduling and prioritizing, and of being both prudent and gracious in delegating time. If I need to choose between helping a friend who's in a rough spot or getting a paper done, I choose to help my friend. If there's a test tomorrow and my friends want to watch a movie with me, I'll choose to study. Sometimes other people don't understand your choices, but good friends and good professors will trust someone who's demonstrated responsibility before. Those with whom I have close relationships don't demand excuses when I can't participate in something. They understand that the decision to study instead of hanging out does not mean I don't *want* to spend time with them.

We will always be judged for the decisions we make, whether by friends, teachers, or employers. And though we become more independent of the school as we move to graduation and become alumni, other people will judge our school based on the choices we make, including what we do with our free time. I've learned that whether I'm in a residence, in class, or off campus, people are watching me. Once, when I was wearing a sweater with my university's name stitched in it, a man came up to me and asked, "Is that a Christian university?" It took me a second to understand what he was asking. I had been oblivious that I was representing Redeemer. Even when I'm not wearing such clothes, people who know where I graduated from are going to be assessing the school and the character it produces, based on my actions.

The choices you make and the priorities you set tell who you are, where you come from, and what you stand for.

Janine Siemens is completing her last year at Redeemer University College. Upon graduating she will receive Bachelors of Arts and Education degrees.

Columns

Intangible Things

Heidi VanderSlikke

Temper, temper

I bobbed in the waves, marveling as usual at the spectacular colours of the Caribbean – the ocean water, clear and green as bottle glass, turquoise skies above, dotted here and there with cotton puff clouds, and the endless miles of sandy white beach known as Punta Cana.

I flipped onto my back, and the waves gently rocked me, carefree. I thought how this must be what it's like to be cradled in the hand of God. Peaceful and content, what a happy soul I was, thankful for the beauty surrounding me and the undeniable presence of the One who made it all. That's the picture I painted for myself.

But, as often happens when I indulge in self-delusion, God reminded me of another aspect of the picture. And it wasn't nearly so pretty.

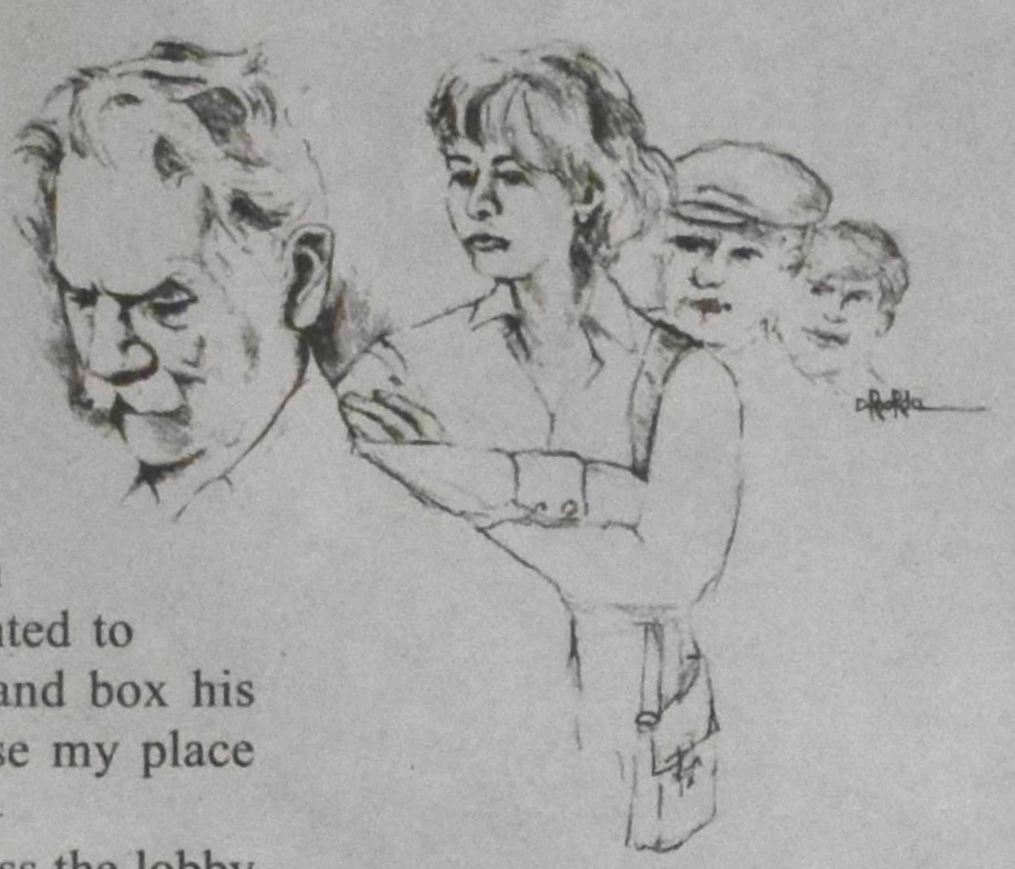
Just that morning I had stood in line to check out of the hotel, a notoriously slow process in most of the southern resorts where we've stayed. Once I had settled the account I would be free to spend the rest of the day on the beach, our last day of vacation.

No "butters"

Two clerks manned the desk, and a couple of people were ahead of me in line. The queue grew behind me. Little progress was made.

A dark-haired man came alongside of me, looking as if he would squeeze in ahead. One thing I won't put up with is a no-good, lowdown line jumper. Maybe it's a hangover from my days in elementary school, where "butters" were the lowest form of life. I looked him squarely in the eye, crossed my arms and stood tall. He got the message and retreated, presumably to the back of the line.

Finally, one of the clerks became available. From nowhere, the dark-haired man butted in ahead of the entire lineup and began paying his bill. My cheeks flushed. I spoke with rising indignation, "Excuse me. The line forms here."



He never so much as turned around to see who was speaking and continued his animated conversation with the clerk. I wanted to step up beside him and box his ears, but then I'd lose my place in line.

I spotted Jack across the lobby and shrugged my shoulders in exasperation. He came over and I said loudly, "Some people are so important they don't need to wait their turn." He patted my arm. Still, the offender didn't flinch. I practiced my iciest stare on the back of the man's head. Were it in my power, I would have called down lightning bolts upon him (not the deadly kind, just a little stray voltage).

When he finally finished and walked past me, the words "arrogant cuss" escaped my lips. The smug expression on his face never changed. He exited briskly, clutching his hotel receipt.

Remorse

Later, as we walked to the beach, I ranted. Jack listened sympathetically. "All that fuss for an extra ten minutes on the beach. It's not right," I said.

"Nope. It's not right," said Jack.

With every sentence, my outrage lost steam. Soon my tirade seemed altogether silly. Finally I laughed and said, "I tell you, Jack – I want justice! (For him, anyway, not for me.)"

Now, floating sweetly on *my* Caribbean, I had to acknowledge my bad behaviour. I couldn't find my nemesis to apologize for the nasty attitude, but I did have to tell God I was sorry. It reminded me of how the dark clouds sometimes pop up literally out of the blue in the tropics. An unexpected downpour can send swimmers and sunbathers scrambling for shelter. Then within a few minutes, the darkness, drained of its fury, dissipates as quickly as it came.

I'm a nice person. The night before, hadn't I spent ten minutes with an elderly couple – complete strangers – at the ATM, helping them work through the confusion of unfamiliar instructions? What about the befuddled old man I had fetched silverware for at the lunch buffet when he couldn't find it for himself?

But the speed and intensity of today's temper tantrum negated any illusions of my goodness. It can't be easy for God to love a volatile brat like me. And yet he does.

Words from a Third Day song drifted through my mind: "Sometimes I wonder how You ever loved me, or why You even chose to call me 'child'... Then I remember – it's by your sacrifice I can say that I am Yours and You are mine."

It's a good thing for me that the God of justice is also the God of mercy. I'd best keep my lightning bolts to myself.

Heidi VanderSlikke (vanderslikke@everus.ca) lives in Harriston, Ont.

My window seat

Mendelt Hoekstra

Back to work

At the end of 2006, my dear wife, Marisa, was diagnosed with cancer so I took an extended leave of absence from my full-time position as music therapist. In 2007, Marisa died of that cancer. I spent the year 2008 at home, understanding full well the joys and struggles (more struggles than joys) of being a single parent to children ages 6, 4 and 2.

Now in 2009, I have returned to work. *Let me rephrase that*... I have returned to full-time work *outside* the house.

Wait, even that needs to be rephrased. I have returned to my full-time *position* outside the house. I rephrase that because a portion of my day is spent wondering how the kids are. A portion of my day is spent calling to check up on them. A portion of my day is spent praying that they are well. A portion of my day is spent doing remedial tasks like cleaning my desk, organizing music so that I could reflect on what has happened over these past two years.

A portion of my day is trying to bite my lip when people suggest that my coming back to work will be good for me personally. *What do they know,* I usually think. It is easy to say, but do they really know?

And maybe they do. Maybe some of them know what it is like. Maybe some of them know the absolute zoo that our house is from 6 a.m. to 8 a.m. when I get the kids up, fed, nourished, dressed, and where they need to be so that I can limp into the office. Maybe some of them know the struggle it is for an "organizationally challenged" person like me to be thrust into a world of being structured and making school lunches the night before. Maybe some of them know what the innocent and pure song of a four-year-old in the middle of a rushed breakfast can do for my soul. Maybe some of them know the pressure of getting psychologically ready for three kids needing attention again after their school and daycare day is finished. And maybe they know the value of a bathtub that fits three kids.

The first question I get from most people at work is about the children and their childcare situation. One colleague asked if the kids were well looked after. I replied, Yes. He said, "well everything is fine then." While his response was innocent it was also incorrect. It seemed to imply that the biggest hurdle with losing a wife is finding appropriate childcare.

Two weeks into our new routine, the kids and I are managing. We all have chores, we all have our roles and we are working through the new path that we find ourselves on. The kids and I have an agreement that we will be patient with each other. If they forgive me for forgetting to put their gym clothes back in their knapsack, I will forgive them when they wear the same underwear two days in a row. It is working.

Although our situation is unique, it isn't different than many that have done this before us. A kind colleague left me a bag of potato chips on my desk during my first week back. She wrote on the card,

"If God brings you to it, he will bring you through it."

It is a good reminder for all weary travellers.

Mendelt Hoekstra (mendelt.hoekstra@gmail.com) is the founder and director of the Music Therapy program at Bethesda, an organization owned and operated by the Mennonite Brethren Conference of Ontario, that supports adults with developmental possibilities. He lives in Vineland, ON with his three children.

Stories of occupation and resistance . . . *continued from p. 10*

to be overly tired from standing up. Then, very calmly, he sat down on the ground. The SD guard turned to look at him with some irritation, but deciding that nothing punishable or dangerous had happened, turned around again.

Acting bored, Dolf cautiously made a small pile of fir needles in front of him. Ever so carefully he took the stack of contraband from his coat pocket, placed it under the heap of needles and covered it all with a branch he was just able to reach. With his fingers he then raked the whole thing so that none of the coupons were visible.

He had just finished this when the van der Wal family, including the maid and two underground resistance fighters, were taken from their home. They were roughly shoved into the police van. The radio, matches, and smokes were also taken.

Quickly Dolf stood up. Now it was their turn. Dolf and his friend were thoroughly searched and their ID put through an intense check. Dolf's friend was taken away; his ID was faulty. But Dolf was allowed to leave.

After the van with prisoners had gone, Dolf could not resist taking a peek inside the home. There he saw a terrified grandmother who begged him to take care of the family's chickens and dogs, two huge German Shepherds. Somewhat less than enthusiastically, Dolf reassured her that he would look after the animals before the Germans returned to seal the house.

He left, arranged a home for the dogs, and returned the next day.

The coupons were retrieved from their hiding place, untouched, and the dogs taken to Zeist by bike – no mean feat.

What happened to the residents of that house remains a question.

Part III ... *next issue*

Kuyper

Outpouring of the force of authentic divine life (Part 7)

I will pour out my spirit on all people. Joel 2:28

Abraham Kuyper

The church of Jesus Christ worships the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and confesses these three to be One Holy God.

As long as the church, as "the people of Jesus Christ", continues to celebrate the great feast days of the Christian year, her celebrative joy can be nothing less than an anticipation of an even greater and more solemn assembly to come. Then she will give thanks and praise and honour with even greater humility and with greater happiness in celebrating the glorious praiseworthy holy name of the Triune God.

Even our Christmas praise is directed to that Eternal Being, for only "God revealed in the flesh" could inspire us to sing praises at the manger. The Eternal God moves us to praise at Easter time because only the power with which he was shown to be "the Son of God" can move our hearts to sing jubilant Psalms of life. In the same way, our Pentecost hymns celebrate the Eternal One. For only those who adore the Holy Spirit as God himself can understand even a little of the endless comfort that comes to us from heaven through the incredible event of Pentecost.

And it is, of course, no accident that the congregation of Jesus Christ, who entered history confessing the Triune God, should express her delight, joy and holy enthusiasm with exactly three great feasts. For it is clear to anyone who cares to notice that Christmas is the great celebration of the Father whose creative power gave us the baby Jesus in the manger. Easter is the celebration of the Son himself as Lord of life. But at Pentecost we celebrate neither the Father nor the Son but God the Holy Spirit. Certainly the Mediator, who was born at Christmas time, who assumed life eternal at Easter time, and who poured out his Holy Spirit at Pentecost, is always most near to us. Yet we recognize the differences, which clearly show us that we are dealing with a threefold reflection of the triune Godhead.

Pentecost

And so we celebrate the last of our great feast days, Pentecost, when the people of God are once more challenged to appreciate the grandeur of the miracle that is the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and are reminded that they may worship the Triune God in all his splendour.

As children of the Lord, we must be sure that above all the Pentecost miracle means the indwelling of God himself, who came down into us. This is not just as a power, or gift, or a radiance of peace, but an outpouring on us of the force of authentic divine life coming to us as *God Himself.*

Those who do not know or confess that the Holy Spirit is "eternally and truly one with the Father and the Son" will not understand this. They cannot join the songs of praise and receive comfort. As their souls continue to wander without comfort, they cannot give thanks either.

It depends totally and completely on the triune God alone.

Don't let anything distract you from coming closer to the Lord. Reject everything that does not help you open your heart to him so you can focus more fully on the unsearchable holiness of the Glorious One. Focus on him, so you won't stumble.

Only the knowledge of *God* is important. And please note well that this knowledge is not just in your head, your memory, or your thinking, but it is a knowledge which involves your whole being to its very depths, becoming as it were *one* with the breath of life within you.

Please note also that the form in which the Holy One presents himself on Pentecost and offers himself as a blessing: as the *Comforter,* one who reaches out not to those who think they have everything but rather to those who are brokenhearted, dejected and "poor in spirit"; these know they are poor and miserable.

American priests celebrating Pentecost in the Vatican Square

The Comforter

He is a *Comforter* not because Jesus is just gone away from us and sends his Spirit to take his place and comfort us while he is away. Jesus never said anything like that. He did say that he was the first *Comforter,* and when he departed, he promised to send us *another* Comforter – not primarily to console us over his departure, but rather to accomplish the very same purpose of Jesus in his coming, namely to comfort us in our misery.

Jesus does not assign this "other comforter" a lower status than his own; in fact he speaks of him as the *real* Comforter, whose task Jesus had assumed but for a short time and in very limited circumstances. He adds emphatically that the Father will send "another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever (John 14:16)." Jesus uses even stronger words by telling them, "It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come unto you (John 16:6)."

The Lord makes it abundantly clear that his work of redemption is only a *means*, and that the final purpose is to bring the *Comforter* into our hearts. We might also say that we see the fruit of his death only with the coming of the Comforter.

How could it be otherwise?

Belonging to God

Is it not true, dear reader, that our inclination and goal in life – in fact the reason why we were created – is to enjoy God and to belong to him?

When we are "without God" we are empty, poor, miserable, and forsaken.

Yet, to "belong to God" does not mean that we have a God in heaven on whom we can call just in the hour of need, nor does it mean having a God who goes before us on the path of life. Rather, it means having a God *within us,* in our soul and heart, a God who is *our* God, who inspires us, who motivates us from within, and who fills us with his power.

Our soul is impoverished and comfortless, like one driven along by storms (Isaiah 54:11).

That is when we experience the true catastrophic nature of our sins.

And if anything is to save and comfort the comfortless, it must also fulfill our greatest need – namely to have *God himself come to us and make his dwelling in our heart.*

The decree of creation for all humanity affirms "your heart as the temple of God." But, the lament of eternal love for sinners affirms "your heart is desolate," or worse, "the abode of the evil one." Even so, the joyful song that the congregation of the Lord at Pentecost sings reflects on the wonders the Almighty has done: "the Holy Spirit has descended into the empty hearts of the people of God."

That is why the Holy Spirit is called, and is, our *Divine Comforter*.

This meditation by Abraham Kuyper has been translated by Jack Van Meggelen (jack@vanmeggelen.ca), who lives in Willowdale, Ontario.

NEW! Christian Courier has a group on

facebook

http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=50535489152
or search groups, keywords Christian Courier.
We would like to know your ideas!

Society

Redeem politics

Nick Loenen

Politics is in great need of improvement. Upon my election to the provincial legislature our family doctor said to my face, "I suppose I should congratulate you, but you need to know I have yet to meet an honest politician." Soon after, our youngest, then a high school student, confided she never told her friends that her dad was a politician since everyone knows politicians are dishonest. Too often, politics is gutter warfare – nasty, adversarial, negative. Can Christians be in politics? Is it possible to redeem politics, even a little?

Yes, it is possible to do politics differently. It takes honest persons but also structural changes. The present system, not just the people in it, is conducive to negative campaigning and adversarial relationships.

First-past-the-post, our current voting system, is a winner-take-all system. Only one candidate, only one party, can win; all others are losers. In our system there is no constructive role for losers. Politicians win by attacking and diminishing others. Canadians don't like attack ads, but under first-past-the-post, that is how it is done.

Legendary BC premier WAC Bennett often said, "Politics is war by another name." Winston Churchill said, "The difference between war and politics is this: In war you get killed but once, in politics often."

Must it be thus? No! Politics is not war and should not be conducted as though it is war.

British Columbia's Citizens Assembly on Electoral Reform recommends a voting system allowing voters to rank candidates. Winning candidates need second and third place support from voters whose first loyalty is with an opponent.

Such a system rewards constructive behaviour – you win by building bridges, by reaching out. It promotes the politics of inclusion, cooperation, and consultation. It does not thrive on conflict, it thrives on conflict resolution.

Are you offended by the recent events in Ottawa, a politics that thrives on placing party interest ahead of the public interest? Change the voting system!

Today, faced with unprecedented public policy challenges and the need to rescue an economy destroyed by excessive self interest, we need a politics that is constructive; a system that rewards politicians for placing the common good ahead of partisan interests. We need the BC Citizens Assembly's recommendation!

On May 12, British Columbia has an opportunity to show Canada that politics need not be a blood sport. And the Christian community in BC has a rare opportunity to help redeem politics.

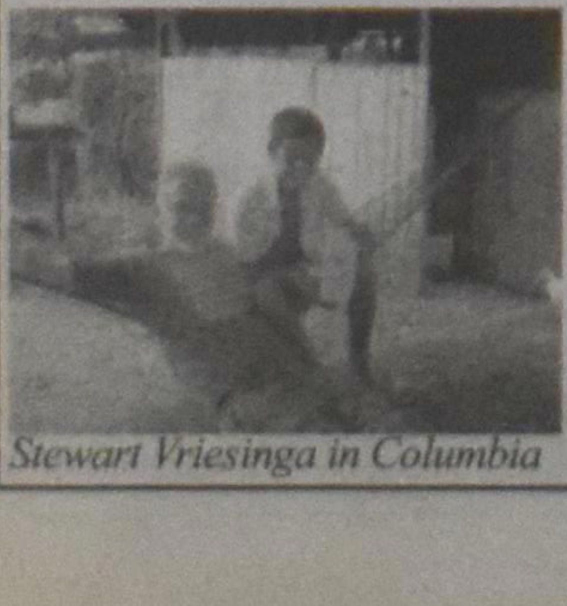
I hope we will not be found wanting. To get involved visit: www.stv.ca

Nick Loenen (nloenen@ smartt.com) is former Richmond City Councillor, and former Member of the British Columbian Legislature. He has written extensively on voting system reform and is co-founder of Fair Voting BC, a citizens organization dedicated to changing the way British Columbians elect MLAs. He likes to hear from Christians in BC who want to help redeem politics.

The Colombian Peace Process

Is it an end to forced displacement or is it cultural genocide?

Will opening the door to Canadian and other foreign corporations lead to "God's will being done on earth as it is in heaven", or threaten rural Colombians with further displacement and cultural genocide?



Stewart Vriesinga in Columbia

You are invited to listen to and dialogue with Stewart Vriesinga, working in Columbia with *Christian Peacemaker Teams*, on

Monday, **February 9, 1:30 p.m.**
at Grace Christian Reformed Church,
25 Channel Nine Court, **Scarborough**.
(just off of McCowan, one block north of the 401, beside the CTV building)

Timely leadership

I was in university when I first read H. Richard Niebuhr's *Christ and Culture*. Despite my terrible memory, I'm happy to say his ideas have actually stuck with me and remain relevant. In fact, I'll go even further. For me, Niebuhr's book, written way back in 1951, is the cornerstone of what it means to be a Reformed Christian in 2009.

Mind you, it seems like the word "Reformed" is quickly falling out of use. I recently heard a pastor describe the CRC as "evangelical" which, while perhaps true in a literal sense, nevertheless sells our rich theological and intellectual tradition short. After all, our Reformed perspective on culture is one of the best things about our heritage. It gives us a framework for judging and responding to, well, pretty much everything, actually.

Different stances

In a nutshell, Niebuhr said there are five ways in which Christians can approach culture.

Christ against Culture: *Christianity exists in opposition to culture and will ultimately defeat it, because it is evil.*

Christ in Culture: *Christianity is reflected in the very best that culture has to offer and is not opposed to it.*

Christ above Culture: *Since culture is temporary and God is eternal, we should work to reconcile the two as best we can.*

Christ and Culture in Paradox: *Since we are part of culture and also Christian, we live in both worlds, each with different obligations.*

Christ Transforming Culture: *The Christian's job is to find the good in culture and convert the values and goals of secular culture into the service of the kingdom of God.*

Getting there too late

In a time when Christians in North America are producing books, films, and music that attempt to compete commercially and artistically with mainstream cultural products, Niebuhr's perspective on culture is useful. At a time when we are trying hard to square scientific progress like stem cell research with traditional morality, or urgent environmental issues like climate change with some of our traditional political views, that perspective on culture is vital.

And yet, at a time when information moves at the speed of light, or when cultural products are born and live and die so quickly, it seems we barely have time to apply our Reformed lens to culture before we miss the boat.

Culture is moving really, really fast. If you bought a Blackberry yesterday, it will be out of date in a few months. If you missed a movie in the theatre, you'd better check Blockbuster before they take it off the New Releases shelf. If you're on Facebook, get ready to jump to a new social networking site that's just around the corner. And consider how fast we moved from an economic boom into a global recession!

Be where it's at

So (somewhat tongue in cheek) I'd like to propose a sixth approach to culture. Call it: **Christ @ Culture**.

We Christians are slow to adopt, slow to engage, and slow to move into cultural spaces. We must not be. We need to keep up. We need to go to online discussion boards, social networking sites, news aggregators – and join in the discussions. We need to master the gadgets and the tools that others are using to create cultural products and get in the game.

And we need to critique culture – not just in meaningful ways, but in meaningful places. We can't just whip off a quick letter to the editor or start a petition. We need to go to the places where conversations are happening. We need to transform culture where we can, be present in culture where it glorifies God, recognize the paradox of culture, oppose culture where necessary, and recognize that Christ is ultimately above culture.

Behind the wall

But we need to do it faster than ever before. Right now, I would argue that Christians are not even keeping up, much less leading culture. We find ourselves reacting to issues rather than raising them. We find ourselves producing books and movies – like the "Left Behind" series – which alienate non-Christians with their distorted and simplistic approach to culture.

In the classrooms of our Christians schools and from our pulpits, we're busy waging war against modernity, seemingly unaware we're in a post-modern world. Or, even worse, we've withdrawn from culture entirely, have built up a wall, and try to remain unspoiled and secure behind it.

I don't think that's our job. I believe Jesus wants us to be present in this world – the one we live, work, and raise our families in. It doesn't matter that we've gone from a culture based on paper to one based on pixels, from one that uses the phone to one that uses text messaging. The task is the same – we need to be present, and active, and involved in our culture, or become irrelevant.

It's time we started thinking about Christ @ Culture.

Lloyd Rang (lloyd.rang@rogers.com) is a member of Rehoboth CRC in Bowmanville Ontario. His first published piece of writing was a short story in Calvinist Contact *when he was 12 years old.*

Back and forth

The power and attraction Jesus Christ exercises over men never comes from him alone, but from him as Son of the Father. It comes from him in his Sonship in a double way, as man living to God and as God living with men. Belief in him and loyalty to his cause involve men in the double movement, from world to God and from God to world. Even when theologies fail to do justice to this fact, Christians living with Christ in their cultures are aware of it. For they are forever being challenged to abandon all things for the sake of God; and forever being sent back into the world to teach and practice all the things that have been commanded them.

H. Richard Niebuhr

Classifieds

Birth

IT'S A BOY!

With thanks to God, Karen and Doug VandeKamp are thrilled to announce the safe arrival of their first child

Joshua Luke VandeKamp!

He was born on Monday, December 8, 2008, weighing 7 lbs 7 oz and measuring 21.5 inches long.

Joshua is grandchild #3 for Bill and Atie Ott of Kitchener, and #5 for Hank (and Therese † 1998) VandeKamp of Toronto.

Correspondence address: 90 Lahay Avenue, Orillia ON L3V 2L1

Anniversary

February 12,1959 — February 12, 2009

With thanks to God we hope to celebrate with family and friends.

Open house Saturday February 14 from 2-4 at First Christian Reformed Church, Chatham, Ont.

HARM BISSCHOP AND ANNIE DE BECK

Children: Laura & Jonathan
Robert – Samantha, Robert
Jeff & Lisa – Megan, Alecia
Karen & Andrew – Eric, Beth

Home address: RR 2, Kent Bridge ON N0P 1V0

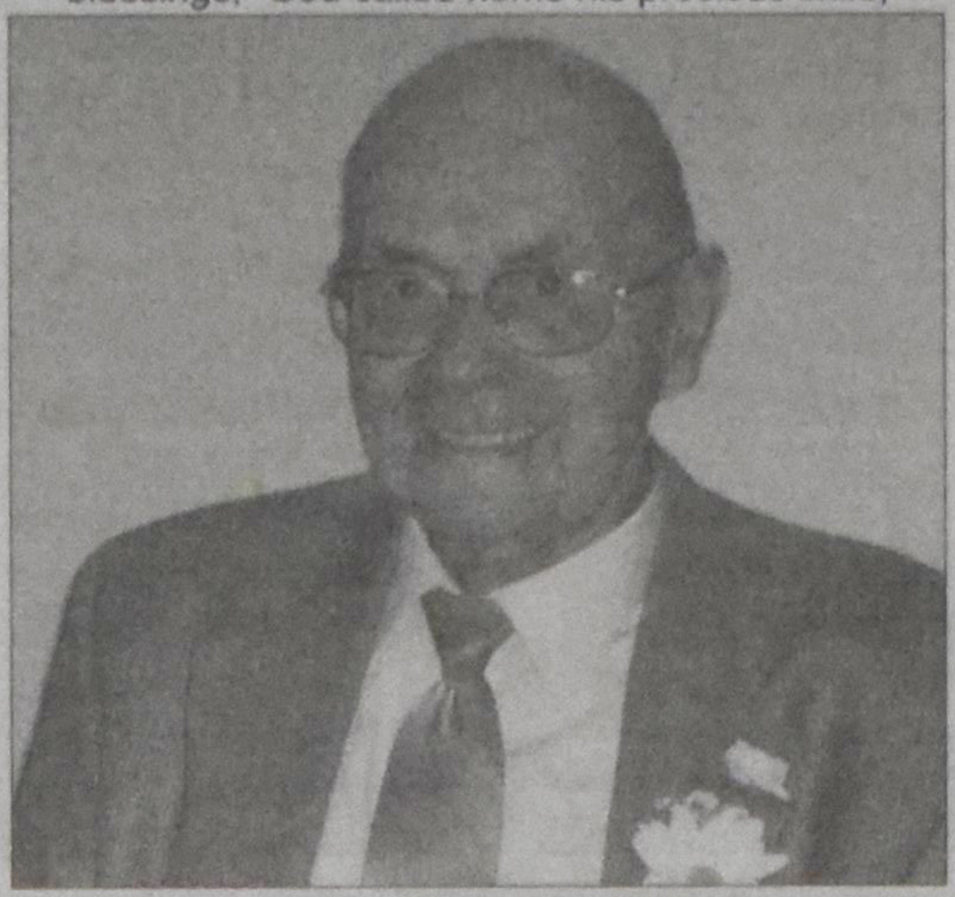
Obituaries

Avereest, Netherland
February 3, 1921

Grimsby, Ontario
January 16, 2009

LEFERT (Leo) BATTERINK

On January 16, 2009, after giving him "a life of grace and blessings," God called home his precious child,



Leo Batterink, at the age of almost 88 years. Goodness and mercy followed him all the days of his life and he will now dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

He will be missed by his wife of 62½ years, Jentina (Tena) Fluit and his children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren:

Mary and Ed Faber
- Heather and Tim Graves – Mitchell, Dana, Kendra
- Tim and Leanne – Eric
- Ryan and Jody – Evan, Graeme, Torin
- Jon and Jill

Annette Westra
- Ian
- Leona

Len and Nienke Batterink
- Marie and Matthew Klaponsk – Jacob, Sarah
- Jenn and Byron Dolan
- Josh
- Kristin

Clarence and Jeri Batterink
- Melanie and Bryan Ego
- Kyle

Correspondence address: Tena Batterink, Shalom Manor
12 Bartlett Ave, Grimsby ON L3M 4N5

But from everlasting to everlasting the Lord's love is with those who fear him, and his righteousness with their children's children . . . Psalm 103:17

Peacefully at his residence to be with his Lord on Tuesday, January 27, 2009.

EGBERT W. RENKEMA

of Woodingford Lodge, Woodstock in his 93rd year.

Beloved husband of the late Geertrude (nee de Boer) Renkema (2001).

Dear father of Margaret Horinga & her husband Bill of Woodstock, Corrie Clark of Neustead, Garma Markus & her husband John of Beachville, Bert & his wife Linda of Londsborough, Albert & his wife Christine of Embro and Ralph & his wife Shirley of Woodstock and father-in-law of Tony VandenDoo & his wife Grace of Clinton.
Loved grandfather "Opa" of 27 grandchildren and 25 great-grandchildren.
Dear brother of Albert and his wife Bets of Holland.
Predeceased by his daughter Winnie VandenDool (1986), granddaughter Carla, great-granddaughter KaraLynn, two brothers and three sisters.

Egbert was a longtime member of the Covenant Christian Reformed Church. His passion for farming remained with him over the years.

The funeral service was held at the Covenant Christian Reformed Church in Woodstock on Saturday, Jan. 31, 2009 at 11:00 a.m. with Pastor Robert Loerts officiating. Interment in the Oxford Memorial Park Cemetery. Contributions to the Canadian Bible Society or the Canadian Cancer Society would be appreciated.
Online condolences at www.longworthfuneralhome.com

Correspondence: Margaret Horinga, 594455 Rd 59 RR 4, Woodstock ON N4S 7V8

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Dutch Service will be held in the Ancaster Christian Reformed Church March 8, 2009 at 3:00 p.m. Rev. Ralph Koops will be preaching.

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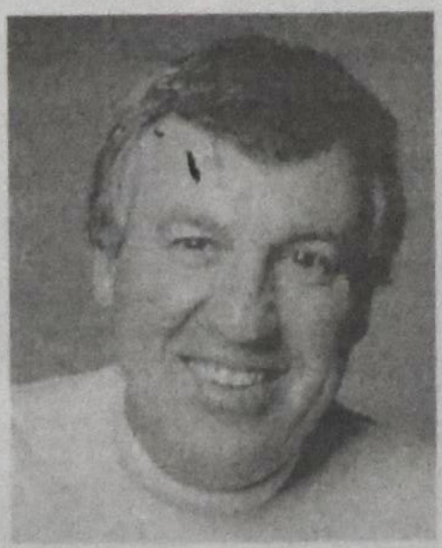

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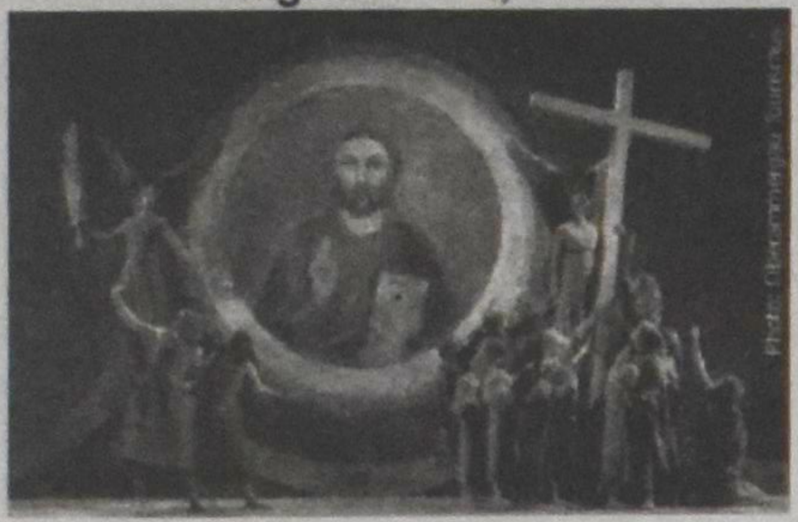

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Our issue dates are now the second and fourth Mondays of the month. The deadlines are 12 days before the issue date. email: ads@ christiancourier.ca

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Covenant CRC in WINNIPEG is currently vacant and is seeking expressions of interest from **retired pastors** to serve our congregation as

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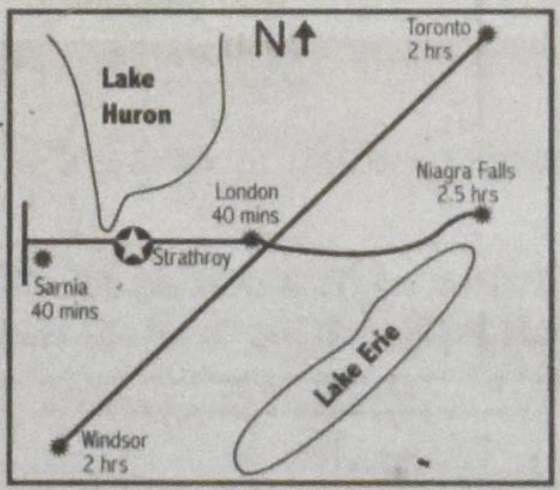

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Information about Woodland Christian High School is available on our website at www.woodland.on.ca

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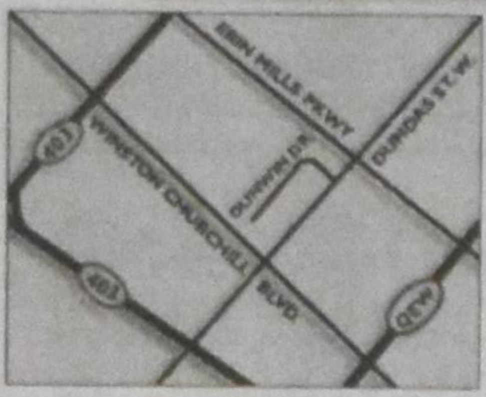

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

9 You are invited to listen to and dialogue with Stewart Vriesinga, working in Columbia with *Christian Peacemaker Teams*, on Monday at 1:30 pm, at Grace Christian Reformed Church, 25 Channel Nine Court, **Scarborough**. See ad p.15

b 13-15 Marriage Encounter weekend, **Niagara Falls**, ON See ad p.10.

ır 6, 7 The Woodstock Dutch Theatre Group presents"Eerlijk of Heerlijk" Market Centre Theatre, 22 Reeve Street, **Woodstock**, OntarioAdmission: $15 – Advance tickets only. See ad this issue for details.

ar 8 Dutch Service will be held in the **Ancaster** Christian Reformed Church at 3:00 p.m. Rev. Ralph Koops will be preaching.

ar 27 The Woodstock Dutch Theatre Group presents "Eerlijk of Heerlijk" at Great Lakes Christian College in **Beamsville** on Friday at 8 p.m. See ad this issue for ticket information and details.

Apr 3 The Woodstock Dutch Theatre Group presents "Eerlijk of Heerlijk" at the London Dutch Canadian Hall in **London** at 8 p.m. See ad this issue for details.

Apr 24-25 Marriage Encounter weekend, **London**, ON See ad p. 10.

May 23 Combined nine Male Choirs (over 300 voices) from Southwestern Ontario, will present D. V. a Festival of Praise Concert, singing all Sacred mass numbers, at the Centennial Hall, 555 Wellington Street, London, Ontario. Saturday, at time 7:30 p.m. Doors open 6:30 p.m. Tickets $13.00 from all choir members and host Choir: St. Thomas District Male Choir "Crescendo". For tickets and information please call: (519) 637-4357 or (519) 631-9245 No reserved seating.

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The Woodstock Dutch Theatre Group presents

"Eerlijk of Heerlijk"

Een plattelandskomedie in drie bedrijven door Hans Gnant A. Smit

Friday March 6th 2009 at 8.00 PM
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News

Museum wants memories and artifacts of immigration

The Netherlands Open-Air Museum (NOM) in Arnhem is preparing its new annual theme. From the end of March 2009, the NOM will be in the spirit of emigration and internal migration.

Large groups of Dutch people emigrated in the 19th and 20th centuries; they went mainly to the United States, but Canada was also a very popular destination around 1950. In preparation for an exhibition we are looking for stories from Dutch emigrants, especially with regard to the objects they took with them on their journey across the world. Which cherished items did the emigrants take with them to foreign countries and what did they mean to them? Was grandpa's old clock closely connected with Holland? Were the nostalgic kitchen tins with typical Dutch scenes a medicine for homesickness?

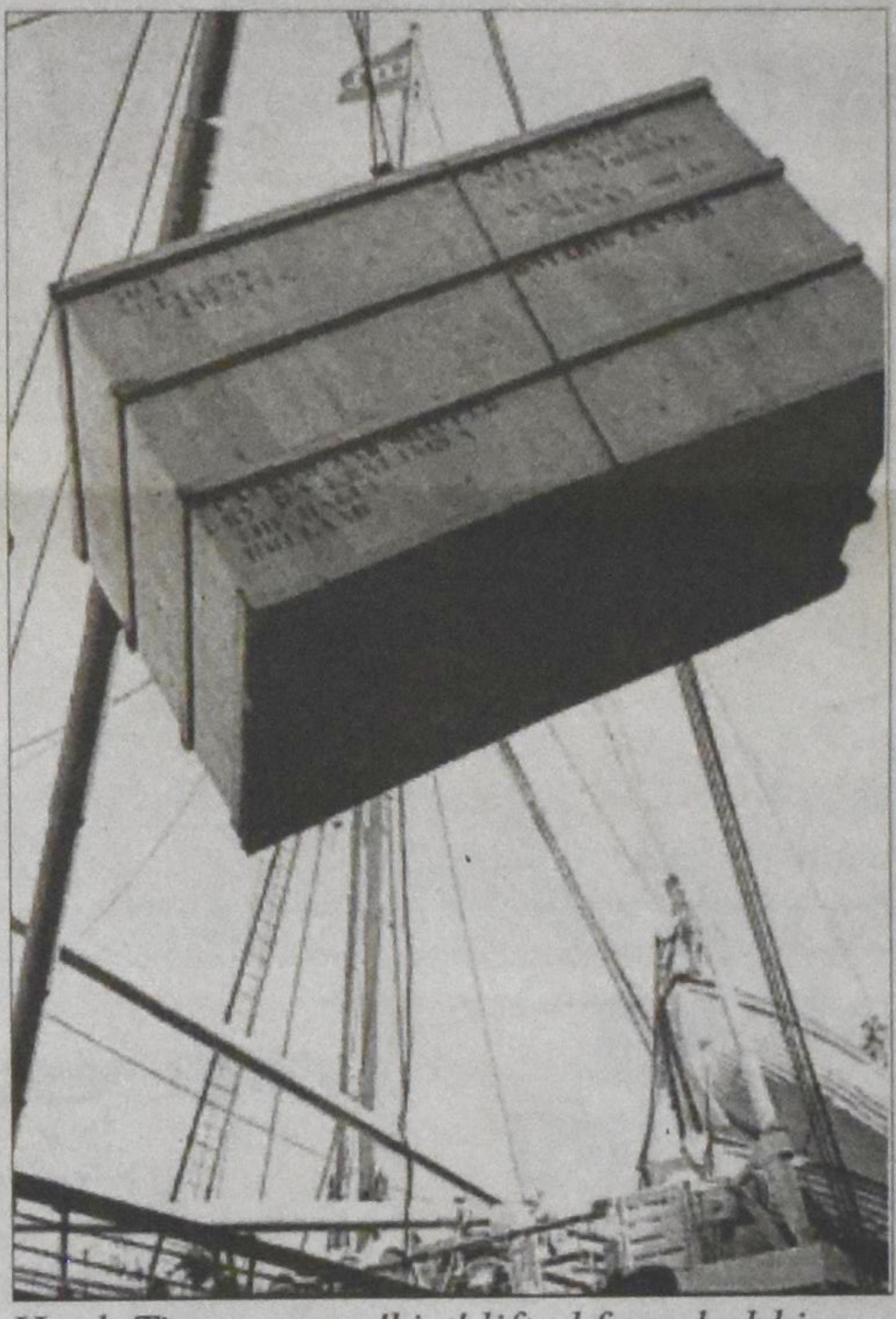
We would like to get in contact with Dutch emigrants and capture the memories and emotions that the objects might have conjured up. We are also very interested in photos of Dutch emigrants with their cherished belongings.

If you are interested in taking part, please send an email to Charlotte Champion, email: C.Champion@openluchtmuseum.nl

Into the "kist": everything but the kitchen sink

One element that comes up again and again in the Dutch arrival stories is the "kist". The government of the Netherlands would only let people bring a small amount of money out of the country but they could take as many possessions with them as they liked. A "kist" was a huge wooden crate for household items. One family did indeed bring the kitchen sink and another visitor told us that his mother brought the rock that they used to hold their front door open because she did not know if such a thing would be available in Canada.

I have only heard one story about a Dutch family arriving with more money than the Dutch government allowed. This family was making the North Atlantic crossing aboard the Groote Beer, which for some reason was having a problem with its ballast on this particular trip. When the ballast problem combined with a terrible storm at sea, most of the passengers and half of the crew were so seasick that they could not function. The father of the man who told me the story was not sick, so the captain asked him to pitch in and help sail the ship. Upon arriving at Pier 21, the captain paid the man exactly what a sailor would have made and thanked him for his assistance.



Hugh Timmerman 'kist' lifted from hold in Halifax.

Excerpted from *Dutch Immigration through Pier 21* by Carrie-Ann Smith.

Note: Pictures from www.pier21.ca/schoolsandkids/students/culture-trunks/netherlands-trunk/

Sudoku – medium

From www.sudoku-puzzles.net

	6	2	8		7			4
	5	9						7
7			5					
1	4				9			
	3	7				2	8	
			3				7	1
					1			8
8						5	6	
2			6		5	7	1	

World's easiest black bread

(Opa's Roggebrood)

Mix these three things and set aside:
2 cups Red River Cereal
2 ½ cups boiling water
¼ cup molasses

Sift together:
1 cup whole wheat flour
1 tsp *each* of salt, baking powder, and baking soda

Add the flour to the hot cereal and mix. Bake at 300 for 80-85 minutes in a greased loaf pan.

Thanks to Henry Vander Molen (1922-2002) for this recipe.

Odds and Trends

by Angela Reitsma Bick

Holey font

To save ink, a Dutch company called *Sprang* has invented an "Ecofont" that prints letters with little holes in them. Apparently, this cuts ink usage by 15 per cent. Earlier experiments using thin or partial letters were unsuccessful. "It turns out that it's necessary to preserve the size and outline of letters to keep them readable," company co-founder Gerjon Zomer says. Zomer admits that the font isn't beautiful, but he thinks it could be useful for non-essential material. The Board of *The Christian Courier* has set up a committee to decide whether or not to start using this font. It promises, however, that if such a change is made, all subscribers will receive a free pair of glasses.

Holy pixels

Pope Benedict XVI has launched himself into the digital age today with the Vatican announcing that a YouTube channel dedicated to his activities and events at the Vatican is now online (www.youtube.com/vatican).

The Vatican's announcement of its new partnership with Google's YouTube coincided with the release of the Pope's annual message for the World Day of Communications, which this year focuses on how to utilize new technologies to promote a culture of respect, dialogue and friendship.

The new channel will be updated daily with one or two news pieces, none longer than two minutes. This is "a real and tangible example of the Church's commitment in the field of new technologies, to reach out to a global audience without regard for nationality or culture," said Fr. Federico Lombardi, director of the Holy See's press office (Vatican City-CNA).

How to stay alert in church:

1. Get adequate sleep. Late Saturday nights are Sunday mornings' worst enemy.
2. Drink plenty of water, though not too much.
3. Eat a high protein breakfast. Foods high in carbohydrates force your body to metabolize them into sugars, which can make you drowsy.
4. Focus on your posture. Avoid slouching, as this encourages sleepiness.
5. If you have difficulty focusing on the service, divert your attention. Occupy your mind, not your hands.
6. Stay alert by flexing muscle groups in a pattern. Avoid movements that attract undue attention.
7. If all else fails, consider pinching yourself. Try not to draw blood or cry out.

Excerpted from The Reformed Handbook, *put out by Faith Alive Christian Resources (2007).*